

Thrombocytopenia with absent radius

Sir,

Whitfield and Barr's article on cows' milk allergy in the syndrome of thrombocytopenia with absent radius (TAR) (*Archives*, 1976, **51**, 337) is a particularly interesting case. The report seems to support the role of cows' milk allergy in exacerbating symptoms in TAR syndrome.

Perhaps the most startling feature of their case was the presence of a radius on one side. This is the first case of TAR of which I am aware in which the radius was not absent bilaterally. The limb anomaly in TAR is quite striking since, for all practical purposes, it is the only condition in which absence of the radius is accompanied by presence of the thumb. Their child is also unusual for TAR in that platelets returned to a normal level during the first year of life. It is much more usual for the platelet count to remain in abnormal range for the first few years of life and even into adulthood (Hall *et al.*, 1969). I think the child in their report must be considered an atypical case of TAR though I would agree with the diagnosis.

If, as in their case, a child with TAR can have a radius present on one side, great care must be taken to see both forearms if radiological examination (fetography) is undertaken for prenatal diagnosis (Omenn *et al.*, 1976).

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References

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- Omenn, G. S., Hall, J. G., Graham, C. B., and Karp, L. E. (1976). The use of radiographic visualization for prenatal diagnosis. *1976 Birth Defects Conference, Vancouver, B.C., June 23-25.*

Drs. Whitfield and Barr comment:

We are grateful to Dr. Hall for writing to agree with the diagnosis in our case, to support the suggested correlation with cows' milk allergy, and to reiterate our statement about the rarity of unilateral radial asplasia and the implications of this for radiographic prenatal detection. Remission of thrombocytopenia in TAR within the first year of life is not unknown. If, as we suggest in our case, thrombocytopenia was aggravated by cows' milk allergy, it may be that the early exclusion of cows' milk contributed to the relatively early recovery in platelet count.

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