Top-Accessed Article: Skin Markers of Occult Spinal Dysraphism in Children


“Marker” skin lesions on the posterior midline are evident in approximately 80% of individuals with occult spinal dysraphism.1 In a retrospective study of 54 children with congenital midline lumbosacral skin lesions, Guggisberg and colleagues found that 61% (11 of 18) of patients with 2 or more types of cutaneous findings in this location had occult spinal dysraphism compared with 8% (3 of 36) of those with a single skin finding (P < .001). Although small numbers of patients precluded risk assessment for specific types of isolated lumbosacral skin lesions, the authors concluded that certain solitary lesions (eg, a lipoma or a dermal sinus) were “high risk.” More recently, a prospective study showed an approximately 35% risk of spinal anomalies in patients with an isolated lumbosacral infantile hemangioma larger than 2.5 cm in diameter,2 adding this to the high-risk category. Both Guggisberg and coauthors and Drolet et al2 emphasized the need for spinal magnetic resonance imaging in individuals with multiple or high-risk isolated lumbosacral skin lesions, noting only approximately 50% sensitivity for spinal ultrasonography (even if performed at <4-6 months of age).

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