



Suction Purpura

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A 12-year-old boy presented at our clinic with a mild upper respiratory infection. As a curiosity he showed the doctor a large oval brown-purplish lesion on his lumbar area [Figure]. The lesion was compatible with sub-epidermal microhemorrhage commonly seen following "hickeys" or sucking wounds. The center of the lesion was intact. The size and place of the lesion were rather unusual, and no similar wounds were found elsewhere. The patient was in a very good mood and not in any distress. The possibility of direct contusion or child abuse was ruled out. Physical examination was normal except for mild signs of upper respiratory tract infection and mild to moderate overweight.

On further investigation, he recalled that 4 days before coming to the clinic he had an embarrassing bathroom accident. After taking a hot bath he let the water drain while sitting in the bath. When he tried to stand up he slid on his back on the bottom of the bath and got stuck. He could not release himself and needed his mother to pull him up. A red lesion was noted over his lumbar area.

In that chubby boy, the combination of wet skin over loose fat tissue around the normal concavity of the lumbar area was acting as a seal. The force that was used to pull him up created a negative sucking power in the trapped pocket. In the center a small quantity of air was probably trapped, which had absorbed some of the forces, thus sparing the skin.



At the follow-up visit 4 days later, the color of the lesion was observed to have changed, being more brownish than red or purple.

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Reference

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