Images in paediatrics

A child with a bluish-purple discoloration on the chin

A 12-year-old previously healthy boy was referred to the paediatrician with a discoloration in the face. There was no apparent previous trauma. Some months ago, he had developed a discoloration on exactly the same place. Examination revealed a circumscribed, bluish-purple, non-tender, discoloration on the chin (fig. 1A,B). Due to recurrent mild iron deficiency, the differential diagnosis included cavernous haemangioma; the patient was therefore referred by the dermatologist for further work-up of possible haemangioma in the liver. Laboratory investigation was completely normal. The discoloration was recognised as a vacuum haematoma. When specifically asked, the boy indeed remembered vacuum sucking a glass on his chin and forcefully removing it.

Differential diagnosis of a bluish-purple discoloration ranges from mild to potential severe underlying diseases. Bruises are commonly seen in children and usually associated with minor injury and trauma. However, underlying haemostatic abnormalities and non-accidental injuries need to be considered. Distinguishing between accidental and non-accidental injuries in children is very important. This case report illustrates that ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking and empathy into a child’s life are also necessary for the paediatrician to make a correct diagnosis.

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REFERENCES

Figure 1 (A) The circumscribed discoloration on the chin. (B) Aspect of the discoloration after extension of the neck.
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