The Bruiser from Cuba

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Mike O'Log

- 7-year-old male transferred to Naval Hospital Portsmouth (Virginia) from Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for evaluation of easy bruising

History

- Mike had been perfectly well until 4 days prior to these pictures when he was taken to the pediatric clinic because new bruises were of concern to his mother.
History (continued)

- No bruising in the past; no nosebleeds
- Platelet count in Cuba was 45,000 with a normal CBC. **BUT** the platelet count was 245,000 with a normal CBC and normal indices in our laboratory

Physical Examination

- Afebrile; normal vital signs
- Not ill-appearing... active, well nourished, well developed
History (continued)

- The past medical history and review of systems is entirely non-contributory
Physical Exam:
- Bizarre linear hyperpigmentation without petecchiae nor purpura
- No hepatosplenomegaly
The total picture... no bruising... rather strangely discolored linear and whorled hyperpigmentation.

The denuded area under his left areola looks like a burn!
Linear hyper-pigmentation on Mike's forearms
Close-up of lesions on Mike’s abdomen
Let's put this all together now...

- He doesn't have leukemia
- The bruising is bizarre.. like something was smeared on his skin
- The big question is, “Could he have gotten into something / played with something that would react with his skin?”
Close-up of lesions on Mike’s abdomen...
HEY!!!... that looks like a hand print!!!
I don’t want to leave you hanging... the answer is...
• Ask and ye shall find... Mike and his buddies were playing with limes from the lime tree in his backyard. Mike was smearing the lime juice on his skin...

• So, Mike has...
Phytophotodermatitis or "Lime Disease"
Phytophotodermatitis or "Lime Disease"

- Fucocoumarins (psoralens), present in limes that he played with, reacted with the sunlight causing a photosensitive reaction.
- Fucocoumarins are present in a wide variety of plants.
Plants containing Psoralens

- Celery
- Gas Plant
- Meadow grass
- Parsnip
- Limes
- Tomato
- Angelica
- Wild Angelica

- Cow Parsley
- Carrots
- Figs
- Oranges
- Bishop's Weed
- Hogweed
- Rue
- ?? others
Now, let’s take a look at another case of phytophotodermatitis that presented as a case of suspected child abuse...

- Phillip Buster was being evaluated for the sudden onset of unexplained burns.
- There was seemingly no explanation and the child protection team was called.
- However, the attending in the clinic asked the magic question...
Strange linear erythema on arms
Now, look again... look very closely... it almost looks like fingerprints on Phillip's left side.
Phillip as he presented in the clinic

The magic question was, "Had Phillip been playing with limes?"
“Are you kidding?,” replied his mother. “I was making Key-Lime pie and every few minutes he would run through the kitchen and I would pick him up and put him outside to play.”

“He was driving me nuts!”
The crime is reenacted by Mrs. Buster
The crime is reenacted by Mrs. Buster
Case closed... another case of phytophotodermatitis

• Phytophotodermatitis due to the application of citrus hystrix as a folk remedy. Br J Dermatol 1999 Apr;140(4):737-8 Koh D

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• An outbreak of phytophotodermatitis due to celery. *Int J Dermatol* 1994 Feb;33 (2):116-8 Finkelstein E; Afek U; Gross E; Aharoni N; Rosenberg L; Halevy S
References

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  Coffman K; Boyce WT; Hansen RC

- A nice review is at Emedicine.com http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1119566-overview