

Saxophone Penis: An Unusual Complication Of Scabies

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Abstract:

Saxophone penis is a rare entity when the penis gets twisted along its long axis, giving it the appearance resembling a saxophone. It is seen in different conditions such as lymphogranuloma venereum, primary lymphedema, penile tuberculosis, penoscrotal hidradenitis suppurativa hereditary angioedema and genital crohn's disease. Scabies is a highly contagious skin disease of worldwide distribution caused by *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*, characterised by generalised intense pruritus. This series highlights the importance of considering scabies in the differential diagnosis of penile swelling, particularly in endemic areas or in patients with suggestive clinical signs and risk factors. A Case series of 5 patients, 5 male patients of age 24, 34, 36, 9 & 11 presented with complaints of itchy lesions and nocturnal itching. On Clinical examination Non – tender, enlarged twisted penis is observed in all the patients.

Keywords: Scabies, Pruritis, Swelling.

INTRODUCTION

The term "saxophone penis" describes a penile structure that twists along its longitudinal axis to give it a saxophone-like look.^[1]

The aetiology for this shape remains largely unclear; however, the most probable series of events is as follows:

- a) The superficial penile arteries that provide blood to the prepuce become branched, winding, and small at the preputial ring. The lower part of the preputial skin near the frenulum is abundantly supplied by the frenular branch of the dorsal artery of the penis.
- b) The main lymphatic vessels that drain the penis travel alongside the dorsal penile vein. Chronic inflammation results in the scarring of the lymphatic vessels and the adjacent connective tissues.
- c) Due to the limited blood flow on the upper side of the penis in comparison to the lower side, the connective tissues on the upper side contract. This leads to a bending of the penis upward.
- d) The corpora cavernosa, continuing as the crus penis, connects to the ischial tuberosity; however, the bulbospongiosus and the glans penis lack such firm attachments, causing them to be pushed upward.
- e) As a result, the underside of the prepuce becomes the lowest point, and since it is highly vascularized, increased fluid buildup occurs, resulting in swelling of the ventral prepuce, which further elevates the glans, accentuating the dorsal curvature and leading to the characteristic saxophone penis shape.^[1]

Scabies is a highly infectious skin condition found globally, caused by *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *hominis*, and is marked by widespread and severe itching.

This series of cases illustrates the occurrence of an atypical complication known as "Saxophone penis" in patients with scabies.

CASE 1:

A 34 Year old male patient came with the complaints of multiple itchy lesions all over the body since 2 months. H/o night time itching present.

On examination:

Multiple erythematous papules with excoriation marks present over the thighs, scrotum, axilla.

A non – tender, enlarged, twisted penis along with healed erosions over the scrotum.



CASE 2:

A 9 Year old male came with the complaints of itchy lesions over the groin since 2 months. H/o webspace itching present. h/o similar complaints present with his brother.

On Examination:

Multiple skin colored papules of size 0.5 x 0.2 cm present over the penis and scrotum. non- tender, enlarged, twisted penis along with erosions of size 2x1 cm.



CASE 3:

A 36Year old male came with complaints of itching all over the body since 2 months. h/o increased itching at night. k/c/o T2DM and is on medication.

On Examination:

non - tender, enlarged, solid twisted penis with multiple skin colored to erythematous papules of size 0.3 x 0.5 cm present over the penis and scrotum.



CASE 4:

A 11Year old male came with complaints of itchy lesions all over the body. h/o similar complaints present in the family.

On Examination:

multiple skin colored to erythematous papules with excoriations present over the chest abdomen and thighs.

a non – tender, enlarged, twisted penis with multiple erythematous papules and few pustules of size 0.3 x 0.5 cm present over the penis and scrotum.



CASE 5:

A 24Year old male came with complaints of multiple itchy lesions over the penis and scrotum since 3 months h/o increased itching at night present. h/o itching over webspaces present.

On examination:/

Multiple skin colored papules of size 0.6 x 0.2cm present over the abdomen, forearms, arms and thighs.

A non – tender, enlarged, solid twisted penis with multiple skin colored papules of size 0.3 x 0.5 cm present over the penis and scrotum.



DISCUSSION:

The phrase “saxophone penis” typically refers to a physical examination observation of a significant curvature and deformity of the penis along its length. Another term for it is “ram horn penis.”^[2] The precise cause of this deformity remains unclear and may differ based on whether it occurs suddenly or over a long time. One suggested explanation involves the contraction, and in some instances, scarring of the connective tissue on the upper side, resulting in a more prominent lower side, which possesses denser blood supply and can lead to swelling and enhanced dorsal curvature.^[3] Although there are various possible reasons for saxophone penis findings, they typically pertain to issues impacting the lymphatics or vessels of the penis. Infectious origins consist of lymphogranuloma venereum, Staphylococcus aureus, and mycobacterial infections. Other possible explanations might include primary lymphedema and, in theory, injury resulting from a penile fracture.^[4]

Scabies is a contagious skin disorder caused by the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which tunnels into the skin and leads to intense itching. This condition spreads through direct skin-to-skin contact or indirectly through contact with contaminated objects (fomites). Diagnosing scabies can be difficult as many patients may exhibit only mild symptoms.^[5] However, some individuals may show the typical signs of exposure, severe itching that worsens at night, and mention

other people experiencing similar issues.^[6] The most prevalent complication associated with scabies is the bacterial infection of scratched areas, commonly caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, which can result in contagious impetigo, ecthyma, erysipelas, furuncles, abscesses, lymphadenitis, and in severe cases, bacteremia and sepsis.^[7] In our patients, we observed this rare penile deformity due to Scabies. Hence, this unusual complication in scabies patients to be evaluated.

CONCLUSION:

This case series highlights the need for awareness among clinicians, as early recognition and treatment of scabies, alongside the management of secondary symptoms, can lead to significant symptom relief and prevent further complications.

Effective intervention often involves both antiparasitic treatment for scabies and supportive measures to reduce inflammation and oedema in the affected area.

This series underscores the importance of considering scabies in the differential diagnosis of penile swelling, particularly in endemic areas or in patients with suggestive clinical signs and risk factors.

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