

Letter to Editor

## Bilateral Milian's Ear Sign: A Rare Presentation to Dermatologist

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Dear Editor,

Erysipelas is a cutaneous bacterial infection involving the upper dermis and/or superficial lymphatics.<sup>[1]</sup> Its diagnosis overlaps with cellulitis, which is the bacterial infection of the deeper dermis and subcutaneous fat, characterised by raised tender erythema. When the erythema spreads to involve the pinna, it is more likely to be erysipelas than cellulitis due to the absence of subcutaneous tissue in the pinna. This differentiating feature is known as 'Milian's ear sign'.<sup>[2]</sup> Bilateral ear erysipelas is rare.<sup>[3]</sup> Hereby, we report this case of bilateral Milian's ear sign for its rarity and uncommon presentation to dermatologists.

A 47-year-old male patient presented to the dermatology department with complaints of fever with painful reddish swelling on both ears [Figure 1]. There was a history of head trauma six months back for which he was treated surgically. There was no complaint of any discharge from ear or hearing loss. Physical examination revealed tender oedematous, erythema with a few vesicles on bilateral ear pinna [Figure 2a and b]. There were no abnormalities of the external auditory canal and on otoscopic evaluation. 'Milian's ear sign' was positive bilaterally [Figure 1]. The haemogram showed leucocytosis. Tzanck smear showed neutrophils with no multinucleated giant cells [Figure 3]. On the basis of the clinical examination, erysipelas and relapsing polycondritis were kept as the closest differential diagnosis. The patient was treated with oral amoxicillin and clavulanic acid combination at a dose of 625 mg twice daily for 7 days and his symptoms fully resolved over a duration of 7 days. Finally, a clinical diagnosis of bilateral ear erysipelas was made.

Erysipelas is a common bacterial infection caused by group A beta-haemolytic streptococcus, *Streptococcus pyogenes* A, of the dermis which may involve superficial lymphatics.<sup>[4]</sup> It is characterised by a well-demarcated, tender and raised area of erythema. 'Milian's ear sign' is a sign of otic involvement



**Figure 1:** A 47-year-old male patient presented with painful reddish swelling of both ears.



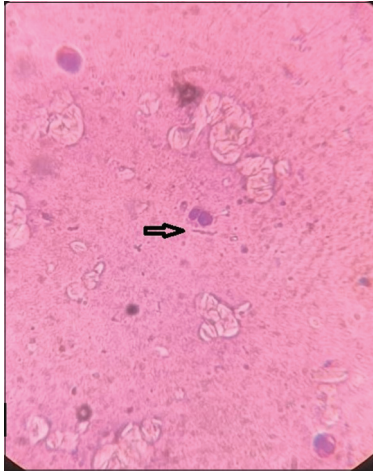
**Figure 2:** (a and b) Clinical examination showing diffuse tender oedematous, erythema with a few vesicles on bilateral ear pinna (Milian's ear sign positive) of the right and left ear, respectively.

of infection, differentiating erysipelas from cellulitis.<sup>[2]</sup> The definitive treatment for this infection is oral/injectable penicillin or clindamycin.<sup>[5]</sup>

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**Figure 3:** Tzanck smear showed neutrophils with no multinucleated giant cells (on 10× microscopy with black arrow).

Bilateral ear erysipelas is rare and its presentation to the dermatologist is also rare, but it should be considered in the differential diagnosis of patients with red, painful ears.

#### Ethical approval

The Institutional Review Board approval is not required.

#### Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent.

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#### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

#### Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation

The authors confirm that there was no use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript and no images were manipulated using AI.

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