

Congenital asymptomatic absence of unilateral sternocleidomastoid muscle

Hitendra Prakash Singh, Sunil Kumar, Satya Prakash Agarwal

Department of ENT and Head-Neck Surgery, King George's Medical University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

Correspondence to

Dr Hitendra Prakash Singh, drhpsingh77@gmail.com

DESCRIPTION

A 56-year-old man visited the ENT (ear-nose-throat) department for his left earache, which revealed the diagnosis of acute otitis externa of fungal origin. He was given standard treatment of aural toilet, antifungal ear drops and analgesics. During routine examination, it was observed that the patient had no sternocleidomastoid muscle on his right side (figure 1). His neck movements were normal (figure 2). There was no history of trauma, surgery or pain in the neck. Rest of the examination was within normal limits. The patient reported that he had had this disfiguration since childhood and did not suffer any functional deficit. He did not agree for further investigations. A literature search was performed, which did not reveal any report of such occurrence without any functional deficit at this age.^{1 2}



Figure 1 Front view of the neck showing complete absence of sternocleidomastoid muscle on the right side.



Figure 2 Front view of the neck showing normal neck movements.

Learning points

- ▶ Absence of sternocleidomastoid muscle is a rare clinical entity.
- ▶ It may present at a later age in life without any functional deficit.

Competing interests None.

Patient consent Obtained.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

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