

Cystic Fibrosis Presenting With Dermatitis

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Background Patients with cystic fibrosis classically present with evidence of pulmonary disease, exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, and high sweat chloride concentrations. Dermatitis as an initial manifestation of the disease is uncommon and has been attributed to multiple nutritional deficiencies.

Observation We describe the case of a 3-month-old female infant with cystic fibrosis presenting with dermatitis in the setting of protein-energy malnutrition. A review of the laboratory study results in this case and others showed that a deficiency in zinc, essential fatty acids, and protein likely contributes to the development of the rash seen in cystic fibrosis.

Conclusions Given the frequent delay in diagnosis, as well as the increased morbidity and mortality associated with protein-energy malnutrition in these patients, it is important to consider cystic fibrosis as a possible diagnosis in any infant presenting with a rash and other signs of malnutrition. The relative contribution of specific nutritional deficiencies and the degree to which they influence and interact with each other in producing the dermatitis remain unclear, although they may all affect a common underlying metabolic pathway