



Fig. 1 (a) Raccoon eyes. (b) Ecchymosis with symmetrical distribution of lower limbs.

2-year-old girl with severe eczema and brittle hair

Question

A 2-year-old girl with cow milk allergy was referred to our institute to attend an oral food challenge. She experienced angio-oedema and urticaria after ingestion of milk-based ice cream when she was 9 months old. IgE levels were high for cow milk and she was started on a cow milk exclusion diet. Her medical history was otherwise unremarkable except for a persistent and itchy eczema since birth, poorly responsive to topical steroids. At admission, she was in good clinical condition, but physical examination revealed severe scaling and erythrodermic eczema involving her arms, trunk and legs. Moreover, she had peculiar frizzy and brittle hair (Fig. 1).

Which of the following would be the next step in the diagnostic process? (Answer on page 847)

- 1 Perform a complete blood count.
- 2 Microscopic examination of a lock of hair.
- 3 Skin biopsy of scalp lesions.
- 4 Faecal occult blood test.

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Fig. 1 Scaling and erythrodermic eczema of the arms, trunk and legs.

A rare complication of a common infection

Answer

The purulent exudate was sent for microbiological analysis and a 2-week course of oral itraconazole and 1-month course of topic ketoconazole were prescribed. The mycological analysis later revealed *Microsporum gypseum*. The patient was re-evaluated 2 (Fig. 2)

and 6 weeks (Fig. 3) after the ED admission, showing partial and total remission of the lesion, respectively.

Tinea capitis is the most frequent fungal infection occurring in children, mainly in school-aged, from 5 to 10 years old. Its inflammatory manifestation, Kerion, results from an intense immune response to the initial infection, and corresponds to the



Fig. 2 Two weeks after ED admission. ED, emergency department.



Fig. 3 Six weeks after ED admission. ED, emergency department.