



NAIL DISORDERS

## **NAIL PIGMENTATION : BE CAREFUL !**

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**BACKGROUND:** Melanonychia commonly presents as pigmented band arranged lengthwise along the nail unit. The most concerning cause of melanonychia is subungual melanoma, although a variety of other causes includes physiologic longitudinal melanonychia, systemic disorders, trauma, inflammatory disorders, fungal infections, drugs, and benign melanocytic hyperplasias. Typically, melanonychia is more common in older individuals. In children, melanonychia is often caused by melanocytic nevi. Melanonychia most often occurs because of increased production of melanin by melanocytes in the nail matrix. A healthy adult has approximately 200 melanocytes per mm<sup>2</sup> in the nail matrix, of which the majority remain dormant.

**Observations:** A over anxious 33 yr-male school teacher presented with brown pigmentation of nail and surrounding skin since last 2-3 years, which slowly progressing. Typical Hutchinsons sign is positive. Dermoscopic studies done and few pictures showing irregular longitudinal lines with brown background was recorded. This non-invasive office procedure helps in deciding biopsy and its site. But we wanted to confirm our clinical diagnosis by doing nail biopsy, as it is gold standard. We did nail biopsy which revealed 1) stratum corneum-large aggregation of melanin, 2) Atypical melanocytic nests at DEJ, 3) Atypical spindle shaped melanocytes at papillary dermis. Same is confirmed by immunohistochemistry. Finally, we made a diagnosis of Acral Lentiginous Melanoma. Then we convinced him to consult a orthopedic surgeon for dital finger amputation surgery.

**Key message:** Melanonychia is relatively common in skin OPD in india. It needs close look and needs a regular dermscopy studies and if suspected nail biopsy. We suggest clinicians to use dermscopy routinely and if suspected do a nail biopsy. Both are office procedures and simple technique to practice as nail & acral pigmentary conditions are on raise. The prognosis of patients with subungual melanoma is poor due to metastasis issues.

