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### Case report

## Postoperative (pressure) alopecia: A case report after orthopedic surgery pediatric and literature review<sup>☆</sup>



Fernando Galván-Villamarín<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Marco Tulio Mahecha-Toro<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Physician, Associate Professor, Orthopedics and Traumatology Unit, Faculty of Medicine, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

<sup>b</sup> Orthopedist, Hospital Central de la Policía, Bogotá, Colombia

<sup>c</sup> Resident in Orthopedics and Traumatology, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Pressure alopecia (PA) is an infrequent entity presented by patients undergoing extensive surgery.

**Objective:** To report the case of a patient under 14 years of age undergoing orthopedic surgery of the pelvis and femur. Also, we present a review of the literature.

**Results:** PA has been related to prolonged surgical time and possibly to the continuous pressure generated by head position during the intervention. It is considered a self-limiting adverse effect derived from anesthesia, which is clinically evidenced during the early postoperative period.

**Conclusion:** Ensuring continuous repositioning of the patient's head during the procedure is the main recommendation for its prevention.

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### Alopecia posoperatoria (por presión): reporte de un caso después de una cirugía ortopédica pediátrica y revisión de la literatura

#### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** la Alopecia por Presión (AP) es una entidad de aparición poco frecuente, observada en pacientes sometidos a cirugías extensas.

**Objetivo:** presentamos el caso de un paciente de 14 años con AP, sometido a cirugía ortopédica de pelvis y fémur, y adicionalmente, una revisión de la literatura existente.

##### Palabras clave:

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\* Corresponding author at: Oficina 217, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Carrera 30 No. 45-03 Bogotá, Colombia. E-mail address: [jfgalvanv@unal.edu.co](mailto:jfgalvanv@unal.edu.co) (F. Galván-Villamarín).

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**Resultados:** la AP se ha visto relacionada con el tiempo prolongado de los procedimientos quirúrgicos y posiblemente a la presión generada de forma continua por la posición de la cabeza durante la intervención. Se considera un evento adverso del acto anestésico, de manifestación clínica en el período posoperatorio temprano en la mayoría de los casos autolimitada.

**Conclusión:** la recomendación principal para la prevención de la AP es el cambio de posición de la cabeza durante el procedimiento.

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## Introduction

Postoperative or Pressure Alopecia (PA) is the term used to describe a set of scars and alopecia that occur after ischemic changes in the scalp. It has a pathophysiology similar to that of bedsores. The condition was first described by Lewis, who presented a series of eight cases in the annual meeting of the American Society of Dermatology in 1959<sup>1</sup>. PA usually presents as a discrete area of alopecia, generally in the occiput, within a few weeks after surgery or prolonged stays in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Here, we present the case of a pediatric patient after an orthopedic surgical procedure.

## Case description

Male patient, 14 years of age, secondary student with a history of bilateral hip dysplasia, left acetabular dysplasia, and bilateral coxa valga. There were no reports of comorbidities or diseases of the scalp. Weight: 55 kg, BMI: 20.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Performed triple osteotomy of the pelvis and left femoral varisation osteotomy. The procedure was performed under combined anesthesia (general and regional with peridural catheter) with the patient in the supine position. The anesthesia for the surgery lasted 5 h, with no sign of hypotension or hypothermia. Bleeding was estimated at 300 ml. There was no specific

mention of the position of the head or its support in the anesthetic record.

During hospitalization, the patient did not present related symptoms such as headache or hair loss. No changes were observed in the physical examination. He was discharged in the second day of the postoperative period.

In follow-up, on the second check-up visit at 4 weeks after surgery, the patient reported symptoms that initiated 8 days after the procedure consisting of a 5 × 3 zone of alopecia in the central right parietal region (Fig. 1) with no other related symptoms. He was referred to dermatology, where expectant management was suggested.

The patient reported signs of partial recuperation at 12 weeks (Fig. 2) and progressive recuperation in following check-ups. In the 5-month check-up, complete recuperation from the symptoms can be observed (Fig. 3), and in following check-ups, there was no new alteration. The patient's progress is summarized in Table 1.

## Discussion

Although there is no definitive histopathological aspect for PA, a variety of findings have been described. Fibrosis with loss of hair follicles has been observed in patients with cicatricial alopecia. Others report chronic inflammation and granulomatous reactions to foreign bodies. Hanly et al<sup>2</sup>. found multiple



**Fig. 1** – Zone of alopecia 4 weeks after surgery. Signs of regrowth.

Source: Authors.



**Fig. 2** – Zone of alopecia 12 weeks after surgery. Signs of hair regrowth and reduction of the size of the area.

Source: Authors.

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