Localised lipoatrophy at the site of Implanon® insertion

A 40-year-old woman, who had had an Implanon® implanted into her right upper arm 3 years before for the first time by an experienced practitioner regularly undertaking the procedure, presented asking for the implant to be removed. She had been pregnant twice in the past, having had two normal deliveries of healthy children. She had suffered atopic eczema from childhood and was still subject to exacerbations that were treated with low-dose topical steroids and emollients. During the first year the implant was in place she had regularly taken paroxetine for obsessive compulsive disorder. She had a body mass index of 24 kg/m² but had gained or lost weight. She had been amenorrhoeic whilst the Implanon was in place. She was otherwise well with no other past history. She had no family history.

At the site of the Implanon in the middle of the inner aspect of her right upper arm she had a localised area of lipoatrophy extending approximately 2 cm either side of the implant and along a length of approximately 15 cm extending above and below the ends of the implant. In this 4 × 15 cm area there was virtually no subcutaneous fat. The lipoatrophy had been asymptomatic and had to be demonstrated to the patient who was not aware of any further implant because she and her partner had decided to use barrier contraception.

A foreign body reaction and expulsion of Implanon has been described.1 Lipoatrophy has also been described.2 Localised lipoatrophy is known as an immunologically mediated inflammatory response within adipose tissue.3 It seems possible that localised lipoatrophy may be another rare complication of Implanon use intended to review the patient at 6 and 12 months to observe whether adipose tissue has regrown.

Peter Lindsay, FRCP, FRCOG
General Practitioner, The Thakur Practice, Silver Lane Surgery, Leeds, UK.
E-mail: peterbd4@aol.com

References

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Peter Lindsay

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