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Cite this as: *BMJ* 2021;374:n1964

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n1964>

Published: 07 September 2021

A “smiling face” on the hip

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This is a tinea corporis lesion in the form of a smiling face on the upper thigh of a 4 year old boy (fig 1). He presented to the clinic with itchy erythema around the 1.5×1.5 cm lesion for four days.



Fig 1 |

He had no history of preceding injury or insect bite, and similar lesions were not seen in other family members. Direct microscopic examination of the lesion showed numerous fungal hyphae, and culture confirmed the fungus as *Microsporum canis*. The annular scaling erythema that was unusually shaped like a smiling face was thought to be secondary to scratching.

Most *M canis* infections that cause tinea corporis are associated with exposure to cats or dogs, and, although it seemed the boy had not been in direct contact with animals, further questioning revealed indirect contact with stray cats in his housing estate.

Scratching can result in atypical appearances of tinea corporis lesions, and a careful history is needed to establish the diagnosis.

Competing interests: None declared.

Patient consent obtained.

Provenance and peer review: Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.