

Title: **Could they have done this to themselves? Unexplained mark in an infant**

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An infant was admitted to the Paediatric ward of the local hospital with an unexplained mark to their forearm, noticed by family. 111 advised to bring the baby to the hospital for further review. The infant was then admitted to the ward due to no obvious cause or explanation from parents and local safeguarding protocol was initiated. The proforma was completed, with no obvious marks to the child, except for very faint marks to the third and fourth fingers of one hand, and a birthmark to the nape of the neck. Blood tests were unremarkable. The first strategy meeting placed the infant under a Section 47, due to the concern that the infant was non-mobile with a significant unexplained mark.

Safeguarding investigations including skeletal survey, CT head and ophthalmology review were unremarkable. The parents later gave an explanation for the mark as that the infant had been sucking on the arm, and asked if this could be a cause. After discussion with one of the consultants, who also works as part of the safeguarding team, it was thought that this could be a possible explanation. Although this was thought to be possible, the team still could not exclude non-accidental or inflicted injury as a cause, meaning the child would need to complete the outstanding safeguarding investigations and Social Services would need to complete their investigation.

There is some evidence in the literature of other cases where 'sucking bruises' have been identified in non-mobile infants brought for safeguarding concerns^{1,2}. As there is not much evidence to differentiate these cases, most of these children have gone on to have safeguarding investigations undertaken. However, it is useful to bear this type of presentation in mind as a possible cause of this type of marking.



References

1. Nagaruru Venkata R, Woolley C. (2015) 'Infantile sucking bruises', *Arch Dis Child*, 100(4) pp 413

2. Quddusi, F., Vasques, A., Gregory, S., Davis, D. and Derauf, D. (2021) 'Sucking Bruises in Infancy', *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 96(5), pp 1369-1371