



# Unexplained lactation

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## Case history

A 50 year old woman presents with galactorrhoea. Breast examination was otherwise normal.



## Question 1

What is galactorrhoea?

## Question 2

What causes would you consider in this patient?

## Question 3

What would be your initial investigations?

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### Answer 1

Striae distensae (stretch marks).

### Answer 2

Striae distensae is a benign skin condition that does not cause any medical problem except anxiety to the patient. It is caused by continuous and progressive stretching of the skin leading to excessive mast cell degranulation with subsequent damage to elastin and collagen. In adolescents, it is usually as a result of a growth spurt. Common affected areas are the abdomen, buttocks, thighs and knees.

### Answer 3

Striae distensae is usually of a cosmetic concern. In adolescents, the condition may improve and the striae become less obvious with time. Reassurance is necessary to allay anxiety. Topical retinoids have been shown to be effective in some patients.<sup>1</sup>

### Reference

1. Kang S, Kim KJ, Griffiths CE, et al. Topical tretinoin (retinoic acid) improves early stretch marks. *Arch Dermatol* 1996;132:519-526.

Send your answers to arrive by 20 November. A prize of 12 months subscription to 'eTG complete' valued at \$240 will be donated by Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd to the first correct entry drawn. The winner will be notified by mail and the answers published in the December issue.



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