

DEFINITION

1. Acromegaly is the disorder that arises as a result of hypersecretion of growth hormone in adult life after union of the bone epiphyses. Hypersecretion of growth hormone before epiphyseal fusion results in **gigantism**.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

2. Acromegaly is characterised by an increase in the size of bones and soft tissues of the hands, feet, supraorbital ridges, sinuses and lower jaw. The skin becomes thick and coarse, and there is often an increase in skin pigmentation and hair growth.

AETIOLOGY

3. Most commonly, acromegaly results from hypersecretion of growth hormone by an adenoma of the anterior pituitary gland. Pituitary adenomas may be -
 - 3.1. of spontaneous onset, in which case the aetiology is unknown and environmental factors have not been found to play any part.
 - 3.2. the result of longstanding target-organ insufficiency, in which case they are also known as feedback tumours.
4. Less commonly, acromegaly may result from -
 - 4.1. Growth hormone cell hyperplasia.
 - 4.2. Ectopic growth hormone cell adenoma.
 - 4.3. Ectopic growth hormone producing tumours.
 - 4.4. Excessive production of growth hormone release factor.
5. The aetiology of acromegaly is thus dependent upon the prime cause of the over secretion of pituitary hormone.

CONCLUSION

6. **Acromegaly** results from over secretion of pituitary hormone which may result from various causes.

REFERENCES

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