

**DEFINITION**

1. Vitiligo is a skin disease characterised by areas of depigmentation.

**CLINICAL FEATURES**

2. The lesions consist of pale or white patches on the skin which do not tan with sunlight. The initial lesions are commonly at sites of trauma, especially the knuckles. They sometimes surround a naevus. The face and neck are usually affected early. There is usually marked symmetry.
3. It is often associated with other diseases, particularly autoimmune disorders. These diseases include diabetes mellitus, pernicious anaemia, Addison's disease, hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism.

**AETIOLOGY**

4. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disorder occurring in a genetically susceptible person. Its cause is unknown. It is likely that the melanocyte (the cell producing pigment) is damaged by an as yet unidentified antibody or toxin.

**CONCLUSION**

5. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease of the skin whose aetiology is unknown.

**REFERENCE**

Ryan T J. Diseases of the skin. In: Weatherall DJ et al (Eds). Oxford Textbook of Medicine. Oxford. Oxford Medical Pubs. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1987. p20.46-20.48.