Reviewer's report

**Title:** Childhood autism in a 13 year old boy with oculocutaneous albinism: a case report

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 16 August 2007

**Reviewer:** Suad Kapetanovic

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: An unexpected association between diseases or symptoms

**Has the case been reported coherently?:** Yes

**Is the case report authentic?:** Yes

**Is this case worth reporting?:** Yes

**Is the case report persuasive?:** Yes

**Does the case report have explanatory value?:** Yes

**Does the case report have diagnostic value?:** Yes

**Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?:** Yes

**Comments to authors:**

**General**

This is an interesting clinical observation that suggests a possible association between yet another hypomelanotic skin disorder with autism. The value of this observation is that it leads to hypothesis that the common denominator of the 3 skin disorders (i.e., "hypomelanosis") is associated with autism. If this association is real, it might have important clinical implications (e.g., children with oculocutaneous albinism may need to be routinely screened for autism).

Furthermore, we can speculate that these hypomelanotic conditions share some of the etiologic factors with autism, as authors themselves state in the discussion.

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**Revisions necessary for publication**

It would be helpful to know the ethnicity/race of the patient.

Since this is a general medical journal, it seems appropriate to briefly educate the readership about autism: a brief paragraph describing core symptoms of autism and its epidemiology would be sufficient.
In differential diagnosis, it would be appropriate to clarify that the child's vision was not impaired by the oculocutaneous albinism, as this could be a factor contributing to the lack of eye contact. It would also be nice to comment on other possible etiological factors, such as genetic predisposition (are parents with autism or other pervasive developmental disorders more likely to abandon their children than non-autistic parents?), or socioeconomic factors (are there any other autistic children in the destitute home? if yes, is the prevalence higher than in the general population in Nigeria?).

**What next?:** Accept after minor revisions

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable