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# Currarino Syndrome: A Comprehensive Review of Clinical Features, Genetic Basis, Diagnosis, and Management

**Dr Jaideep Reddy R**
Junior Resident , General Surgery , JNMC, Sawagi, Meghe, Wardha

**Dr R K Shinde**
HOD & Professor , General Surgery , JNMC, Sawangi , Meghe , Wardha

**Dr Khushbu vaidhya**
Senior Resident , General surgery, JNMC, Sawangi, Meghe, Wardha

**Dr Ashnagiri Nitish Reddy**
Junior Resident,General Surgery ,JNMC, Sawangi, Meghe, Wardha

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## Abstract

Currarino Syndrome (CS) is a rare congenital disorder characterized by a distinct clinical triad of anorectal malformations, sacral anomalies, and presacral masses. It is primarily caused by mutations in the MNX1 gene, located on chromosome 7, which encodes a transcription factor crucial for the development of the sacral region and anorectal structures during embryogenesis. Mutations in MNX1 lead to defects in these regions, resulting in the hallmark features of CS. The condition follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern, and while the severity of the symptoms varies, the disease can manifest with a wide spectrum of clinical presentations, from mild features to more severe cases requiring extensive surgical intervention. Despite its genetic basis, other unidentified genetic factors may contribute to the disease, suggesting a complex etiology. Diagnosis of CS relies heavily on imaging techniques such as radiographs, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and computed tomography (CT), which are crucial for identifying sacral malformations and presacral masses. Genetic testing for MNX1 mutations plays a pivotal role in confirming the diagnosis, especially in cases with atypical features. Management of CS is multidisciplinary, involving surgical interventions to correct anorectal malformations and excise presacral masses, along with long-term follow-up for potential complications. Genetic counseling is also essential for families, as it helps them understand the inheritance pattern, recurrence risks, and reproductive options. Despite progress, further research is needed to explore other genetic contributors and improve diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for CS.

**Keywords**: Currarino Syndrome, MNX1 gene, anorectal malformations, sacral anomalies, genetic counseling.

## Introduction

Currarino Syndrome (CS) is a rare congenital disorder characterized by a distinct triad of clinical features: anorectal malformations, sacral bone abnormalities, and a presacral mass. This syndrome presents unique challenges for diagnosis and management due to its variable expressivity, ranging from mild to severe forms. CS is caused by mutations in the **MNX1** gene, which plays a pivotal role in the development of the sacral region during embryogenesis. Although the condition has been recognized for several decades, it remains a topic of ongoing research and clinical interest. This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of CS, including its clinical features, genetic basis, diagnostic approaches, and management challenges, with a particular focus on the current understanding of its pathophysiology.Currarino Syndrome was first described in the 1980s and is now recognized as a well-defined genetic condition that affects various systems, including the gastrointestinal and urinary systems. The syndrome manifests primarily as a combination of sacral deformities, anorectal malformations, and presacral masses, often leading to functional impairments. The syndrome follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern, with mutations in the MNX1 gene being a key genetic factor [1].

The hallmark of Currarino Syndrome is the presence of a clinical triad. Anorectal malformations include a range of defects such as imperforate anus, rectal atresia, or stenosis [2]. The sacral anomalies typically involve malformations or underdevelopment of the sacrum and coccyx [3]. Lastly, the presacral mass is often composed of a tumor-like tissue, which may be benign or, in rare cases, malignant [4]. These three features are central to the diagnosis of CS, although other additional abnormalities may also be observed. One of the challenging aspects of Currarino Syndrome is its variability in clinical presentation. Some individuals may exhibit all three classic features, while others may present only one or two [5]. The severity of symptoms can range from mild forms, where patients have no significant health issues, to severe cases, where early intervention is required to prevent life-threatening complications. This variability makes early and accurate diagnosis crucial for effective management.The genetic basis of CS lies in mutations of the MNX1 gene, located on chromosome 7. The gene encodes a transcription factor critical in the development of the caudal spinal cord and associated structures, such as the sacrum and anorectal region [6]. Loss-of-function mutations in MNX1 are believed to disrupt normal embryonic development, resulting in the characteristic clinical features of CS. However, it is important to note that not all cases of CS are linked to MNX1 mutations, suggesting that other genetic factors may also contribute to the condition [7].

Currarino Syndrome follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern. This means that individuals with one mutated allele of the MNX1 gene are at risk of passing the disorder to their offspring [8]. However, the degree of expressivity varies, meaning that even individuals within the same family may present with different manifestations of the syndrome. The condition's incomplete penetrance implies that not all individuals with the mutation will show overt symptoms, further complicating diagnosis [9].Given the hereditary nature of Currarino Syndrome, prenatal diagnosis plays a significant role in managing the disease. Prenatal imaging techniques such as ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) can identify some of the hallmark features of CS, such as sacral abnormalities or presacral masses [10]. Genetic testing can confirm the diagnosis, and genetic counseling can provide valuable information to families regarding recurrence risks and reproductive options [11].

The diagnosis of CS heavily relies on imaging studies. X-rays can reveal sacral malformations, while MRI and CT scans are more sensitive for detecting presacral masses. MRI is particularly useful in visualizing the size, location, and composition of the presacral mass, aiding in the differentiation of benign from malignant lesions [12]. Imaging plays a key role in both the initial diagnosis and the ongoing management of the condition.Several conditions may present with overlapping features to Currarino Syndrome, making differential diagnosis critical. These include other forms of anorectal malformations, spinal malformations, and various congenital syndromes with similar clinical features. An accurate diagnosis of CS is crucial for implementing appropriate treatment and management plans, as other conditions may require different therapeutic approaches [13].

Diagnosing Currarino Syndrome is often challenging due to its clinical variability and the overlap with other congenital disorders. In mild cases, some individuals may not be diagnosed until later in life when complications arise. Early recognition, especially in individuals with subtle features, is essential for providing timely interventions that can improve the patient's quality of life and prevent long-term complications [14].The management of Currarino Syndrome is multidisciplinary, involving specialists from various fields, including pediatric surgery, urology, and genetics. Surgical intervention is often necessary to correct anorectal malformations and remove presacral masses. The goal of surgery is to improve functional outcomes and prevent complications such as incontinence or infection. Long-term follow-up is essential to monitor for potential issues such as urinary tract problems, bowel dysfunction, or recurrent masses [15].

Surgical management of CS typically focuses on correcting anorectal malformations, removing presacral masses, and addressing sacral deformities. The approach to surgery depends on the severity of the clinical presentation. In severe cases, multiple surgeries may be required, with the focus on improving anatomical function and preventing further complications. Early surgical intervention is often associated with better outcomes [12].Long-term monitoring is critical for individuals with Currarino Syndrome. Regular follow-up visits allow healthcare providers to assess the patient's functional outcomes, particularly in terms of bowel and urinary function. Additionally, patients with CS may develop new health issues as they age, such as recurrent masses or neurological problems, making ongoing surveillance necessary for timely intervention [13].

The prognosis for individuals with Currarino Syndrome varies depending on the severity of the disease and the success of surgical interventions. Many individuals with mild forms of CS can lead relatively normal lives, with minimal long-term complications. However, more severe cases may result in significant physical and developmental challenges. Quality of life can be significantly improved with early diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and long-term care, but some patients may continue to experience difficulties related to bowel and urinary function [14].Genetic counseling plays an essential role in managing Currarino Syndrome. Families with a history of the condition can benefit from counseling to understand the risks of recurrence and the implications of genetic testing. Counseling also provides families with guidance on reproductive options, including prenatal testing and family planning, to reduce the risk of passing the disorder on to future generations [15].

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive review of the clinical features, genetic basis, diagnostic challenges, and management strategies of Currarino Syndrome. By consolidating the current

understanding of CS, this paper aims to inform healthcare professionals about the key aspects of diagnosis and treatment, helping them navigate the complexities associated with this rare disorder. Furthermore, the review aims to highlight areas in need of further research to improve patient outcomes and enhance the understanding of the underlying genetic mechanisms of the disease.

**Clinical Features and Diagnosis of Currarino Syndrome**

Anorectal malformations, including imperforate anus, rectal atresia, and anal stenosis, are hallmark features of Currarino Syndrome (CS). These defects can range from simple to complex, requiring surgical correction. They are typically detected shortly after birth when failure to pass meconium or visible anal defects prompt further investigation. These abnormalities, when combined with sacral and presacral anomalies, are central to the diagnosis of CS [16].Sacral bone abnormalities, such as partial or complete sacral agenesis, hypoplasia, or malalignment, are key to CS diagnosis. These defects can lead to functional issues like bowel, bladder, and sexual dysfunction. Sacral malformations are often observed on radiographs and are important for distinguishing CS from other conditions. In milder cases, these abnormalities may not be immediately evident without further imaging [17].

Presacral masses, typically benign tumor-like tissues located anterior to the sacrum, are another defining feature of CS. The size and impact of these masses vary, and in some cases, they may compress nearby structures like the rectum or spinal cord. While most are benign, malignant transformation is rare. Imaging techniques such as ultrasound, CT, and MRI are essential for identifying these masses and confirming the diagnosis of CS [18].CS shows considerable clinical variability. The classic triad of anorectal malformations, sacral deformities, and presacral masses is common, but some individuals may present with only one or two features. Mild cases may remain undiagnosed for extended periods, while severe cases often require immediate surgical intervention [19].

Patients may also exhibit associated abnormalities, including spinal defects, urinary tract malformations, and neurological issues like tethered cord syndrome. Cognitive delays or developmental disorders can occur but are not universally present. The impact of these additional features varies across individuals [20].Diagnosing CS can be challenging due to the variability of symptoms and overlap with other congenital disorders. High clinical suspicion is needed for early diagnosis, especially when only one or two components of the classic triad are present. Diagnostic delays may lead to missed opportunities for early surgical intervention [21].

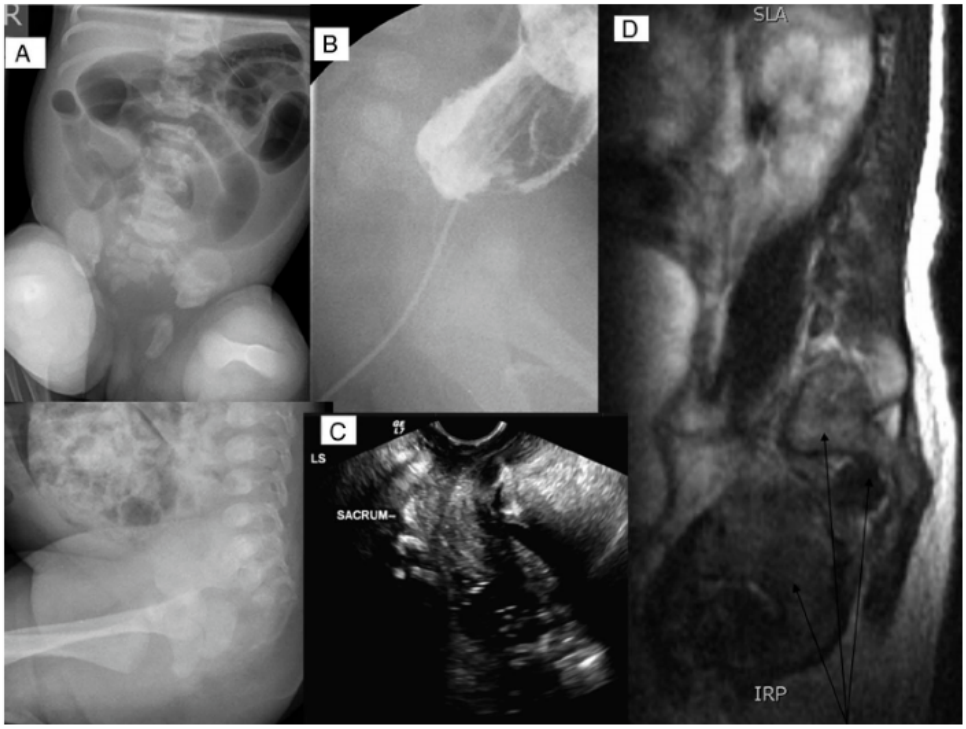


**Figure 1: Plain, contrast, ultrasound and MRI showing scimitar hemisacrum, anorectal stenosis and presacral mass (arrows in MRI) [22]**

Imaging plays a vital role in diagnosing CS, particularly for visualizing sacral malformations and presacral masses. Initial radiographs of the sacrum can reveal sacral abnormalities, but further imaging with MRI or CT is often needed to assess the presacral mass. MRI is especially useful for visualizing soft tissues and the presacral mass's relationship with surrounding structures. Ultrasound is helpful for early detection of presacral masses, particularly in prenatal or neonatal imaging [22].Genetic testing is increasingly crucial in diagnosing CS. Mutations in the MNX1 gene, located on chromosome 7, are responsible for most cases. Genetic testing confirms the diagnosis, especially in ambiguous cases, and provides valuable information about inheritance patterns and risks for future generations. Genetic counseling is an important aspect of the diagnostic process, helping families understand the implications of the diagnosis and make informed decisions about family planning and reproductive options [23].

**Genetic Basis of Currarino Syndrome**

Currarino Syndrome (CS) is a rare congenital disorder primarily caused by mutations in the MNX1 gene. This gene encodes a transcription factor that plays a crucial role in the development of the sacral region during embryogenesis. Mutations in this gene disrupt the normal formation of the sacrum, leading to the characteristic clinical features of CS, including anorectal malformations, sacral anomalies, and presacral masses. In addition to MNX1, research has also suggested the involvement of other genetic factors, although the full genetic underpinnings of the syndrome are still being explored. This section will provide a comprehensive overview of the genetic basis of CS, focusing on the role of MNX1, inheritance patterns, and ongoing research efforts [24].

The primary genetic cause of Currarino Syndrome is mutations in the MNX1 gene, located on chromosome 7. This gene encodes a homeobox transcription factor that is crucial for the development of

the caudal spinal cord and associated structures, such as the sacrum and anorectal region. Mutations in MNX1 lead to abnormal development in these regions, resulting in the hallmark features of CS. These mutations are typically loss-of-function mutations, meaning that the normal function of the MNX1 protein is disrupted or eliminated, affecting critical signaling pathways involved in spinal cord and sacral development [24].

The MNX1 gene is involved in regulating the expression of other genes that are critical for the differentiation and development of mesodermal and neural tissues during early embryogenesis. When a mutation occurs in MNX1, it impairs these developmental processes, leading to defects in the sacrum, anorectal region, and presacral area. Studies have shown that MNX1 is crucial for the proper formation of the neural tube and the sacral vertebrae, and disruption of this gene causes defects in the formation of the sacral and coccygeal bones. The lack of functional MNX1 protein also results in abnormal formation of the anorectal region, which manifests as anorectal malformations in CS patients [25].

Currarino Syndrome follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern. This means that an individual only needs one copy of the mutated MNX1 gene to develop the syndrome. The mutation can be inherited from an affected parent or arise de novo. In families with a known history of CS, there is a 50% chance that an offspring will inherit the mutation and develop the syndrome. However, it is important to note that the severity of the syndrome can vary widely, even among individuals with the same genetic mutation, due to factors such as variable expressivity and incomplete penetrance [26].

The clinical features of Currarino Syndrome can vary greatly among affected individuals, even within the same family. This variability in the severity of symptoms is known as variable expressivity, and it is a hallmark feature of CS. While all individuals with CS have mutations in the MNX1 gene, the degree to which the disease manifests can differ. Some individuals may present with only mild features, such as a minor sacral defect or a small presacral mass, while others may experience more severe symptoms, including significant anorectal malformations and neurological impairments. Incomplete penetrance means that not all individuals who inherit the mutation will show signs of the disease, further complicating the clinical diagnosis and genetic counseling process [27].

While MNX1 mutations are responsible for the majority of Currarino Syndrome cases, research has suggested that other genetic factors may also contribute to the disease. In some rare cases, mutations in other genes involved in sacral and neural development may contribute to CS. These genes are often related to the signaling pathways that are also regulated by MNX1 during embryogenesis. For instance, mutations in genes that govern cell differentiation and skeletal formation may interact with MNX1 mutations to influence the clinical outcome in CS. However, the exact role of these additional genetic factors is not yet fully understood, and more research is needed to uncover the full spectrum of genetic contributors to the syndrome [28].

Genetic testing has become an essential tool in the diagnosis of Currarino Syndrome, particularly in cases where clinical features are subtle or atypical. Genetic testing for MNX1 mutations can confirm the diagnosis and help differentiate CS from other conditions with overlapping clinical features. For individuals with a family history of CS, genetic testing can identify carriers of the mutation, allowing for early diagnosis and better management of the disease. Additionally, prenatal genetic testing can be used

to detect MNX1 mutations in at-risk pregnancies, enabling early intervention and informed decision-making for expectant parents [29].

Genetic counseling plays a crucial role in the management of Currarino Syndrome. Families with a history of CS benefit from counseling that helps them understand the inheritance pattern of the syndrome, the risks of recurrence in future pregnancies, and the implications of genetic testing. Genetic counseling is particularly important for parents of children diagnosed with CS, as it provides them with valuable information about the potential for passing the mutation to future generations. In some cases, genetic counseling may also offer guidance on reproductive options, including the use of prenatal testing or assisted reproductive technologies such as preimplantation genetic diagnosis to prevent the transmission of the mutation to offspring [30].

**Imaging Techniques for Diagnosis**

Imaging plays a crucial role in the diagnosis and management of Currarino Syndrome (CS), a rare congenital disorder that involves a triad of clinical features: anorectal malformations, sacral abnormalities, and presacral masses. Given the complexity and variability of CS, accurate and timely imaging is essential for confirming the diagnosis, assessing the extent of malformations, and planning appropriate treatment. The primary imaging modalities include X-rays, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and ultrasound. Each of these imaging techniques provides unique insights into different aspects of the syndrome, helping clinicians visualize and assess the malformations associated with CS.

X-rays are typically the first imaging technique used in the diagnosis of Currarino Syndrome. Radiographs are especially useful for identifying sacral bone abnormalities, which are one of the characteristic features of CS. X-rays can reveal malformations of the sacrum, such as sacral agenesis, hypoplasia, or other structural anomalies. The use of lateral and anteroposterior views of the sacrum can help visualize the presence of these defects and provide a preliminary assessment of the severity of the skeletal abnormalities. However, X-rays are limited in their ability to visualize soft tissues and presacral masses, which is why additional imaging modalities are often required to obtain a complete picture of the disease [31].

While X-rays are useful for detecting sacral bone abnormalities, CT scans provide more detailed cross-sectional images and are valuable in assessing both bone and soft tissue structures. CT imaging is particularly useful for visualizing the presacral mass, which is often present in Currarino Syndrome. The presacral mass, typically located in the retroperitoneal space anterior to the sacrum, can vary in size and composition. CT scans allow for better visualization of the mass, including its location, size, and potential impact on surrounding structures, such as the rectum, urinary bladder, and spinal cord. Furthermore, contrast-enhanced CT scans can improve the resolution and delineation of soft tissue structures, helping clinicians differentiate between benign and malignant masses. Despite its advantages, CT imaging exposes patients to ionizing radiation, making it less ideal for younger patients or for repeated imaging [32].

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is often the imaging modality of choice for patients with Currarino Syndrome due to its ability to provide high-resolution images of both soft tissues and bone structures without the use of ionizing radiation. MRI is particularly useful for visualizing the presacral mass in great detail. Unlike CT, MRI provides excellent soft tissue contrast and can clearly define the size, location, and relationship of the presacral mass to surrounding organs. MRI is also highly effective in identifying

sacral abnormalities, including defects in the sacrum, coccyx, and surrounding soft tissues. It can help evaluate the extent of spinal cord involvement and detect any associated malformations in the central nervous system, such as tethered cord syndrome or spinal cord lipomas, which can sometimes be seen in patients with CS [33].

MRI also plays an important role in evaluating other anatomical structures that may be affected in Currarino Syndrome. For example, it can provide detailed images of the anorectal region to assess anorectal malformations and can help in planning surgical intervention. Given the absence of radiation exposure, MRI is particularly advantageous for pediatric patients, who are often diagnosed with CS early in life. In addition to its diagnostic value, MRI is essential for long-term follow-up of patients with CS to monitor for any new or recurrent masses and assess the overall health of the spine and sacrum [34].

Ultrasound is often used in the prenatal and neonatal diagnosis of Currarino Syndrome. Prenatal ultrasound can detect some of the key features of CS, such as sacral abnormalities and presacral masses. It is particularly useful in the early identification of sacral agenesis or sacral hypoplasia, which are common in CS. In addition to identifying bone abnormalities, ultrasound can also be used to assess the size and location of a presacral mass in utero. The non-invasive nature of ultrasound and its ability to provide real-time imaging make it an important tool for the early detection of CS. However, ultrasound has limitations in its ability to visualize certain abnormalities in detail, particularly the presacral mass, which may require further imaging with MRI or CT to fully assess the mass and its potential impact on adjacent structures [35].In neonatal cases, abdominal ultrasound can help identify any associated gastrointestinal issues, such as rectal atresia or other anorectal malformations. Furthermore, ultrasound is an effective tool for monitoring the progression of presacral masses over time, especially when MRI may not be readily available or when radiation exposure should be minimized in young patients [36].

One of the most important roles of imaging in Currarino Syndrome is differentiating between benign and malignant presacral masses. While most presacral masses in CS are benign, the possibility of malignancy cannot be ruled out entirely. MRI and CT scans are invaluable in this regard, as they provide detailed information on the size, shape, and location of the mass, as well as its relationship to surrounding tissues. Contrast-enhanced imaging can provide additional information about the vascularity of the mass, which can help differentiate benign masses from malignant ones. In cases where malignancy is suspected, biopsy or further diagnostic procedures may be necessary to confirm the diagnosis [37].

Imaging is critical in the surgical planning for patients with Currarino Syndrome. Accurate imaging allows surgeons to assess the location and size of the presacral mass, identify the involvement of adjacent structures, and plan the best surgical approach. MRI is particularly useful for planning surgeries that involve the anorectal region or sacral deformities, as it provides high-resolution images of both soft tissues and bones. Detailed preoperative imaging helps reduce the risk of complications and allows for more precise interventions, improving surgical outcomes and functional recovery [37].

After surgical intervention, long-term monitoring using imaging techniques is essential to detect any recurrence of the presacral mass or development of new abnormalities. MRI is often used for follow-up imaging to evaluate the status of the sacral bone and spinal cord, as well as to monitor the presacral region for any signs of tumor recurrence. Regular imaging helps in the early detection of complications such as urinary or gastrointestinal issues, and it enables timely intervention if needed. For pediatric patients,

periodic follow-up imaging with ultrasound or MRI is necessary to ensure the patient's development remains on track and to address any emerging concerns associated with CS [37].

**Management of Currarino Syndrome**

The management of Currarino Syndrome (CS) requires a multidisciplinary approach, with early and effective intervention crucial for improving outcomes. Treatment typically includes surgical interventions to correct anorectal malformations, address sacral deformities, and remove presacral masses, as well as long-term follow-up care. Surgical correction of anorectal malformations, such as imperforate anus or rectal atresia, is essential and may involve procedures like colostomy, perineal anoplasty, or more complex surgeries like pull-through or abdominoperineal excision [38]. Early surgery helps prevent complications like bowel obstruction and incontinence.

| Case No | Gender | Age | Chief complaint | Neurological examination | Sacral bone deformity | Anorectal malformation | Presacral mass and associated pathologies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | male | 14 days | constipation (strain while defecating), sacral skin lesion | normal | sacral scimitar-shaped defect | a narrow ventrally displaced anus | solid mass 45 × 25 mm in size, tight filum terminale |
| 2 | female | 6 months | constipation, abdominal distension, lumbosacral skin lesion | paraparesis, no anal sphincter tonus, reflexes ↓↓ | total sacral agenesis, lumbar hemivertebrae | a narrow anal canal, omphalos | ASM, pes equinovarus, hydrocephalus |
| 3 | female | 4 years | constipation | normal | sacral scimitar-shaped defect, partial agenesis of the sacrum | a narrow ventrally displaced anus, perianal fistulae, Hirschsprung's disease | ASM 32 × 21 mm in size, tight filum terminale |
| 4 | male | 5 years | lumbar pain, weakness, sacral skin lesion | paraparesis, no anal sphincter tonus, reflexes ↓↓ | sacral scimitar-shaped defect | a narrow anal canal, Hirschsprung's disease | cystic solid mass 20 × 25 × 15 mm in size, tight filum terminale, dermal sinus defect, urinary calculus |

↓ = Diminished.

**Figure 2: Findings for patients with Currarino triad [38]**

Presacral masses are another defining feature of CS and usually require surgical removal to prevent compression, infection, or malignancy. Preoperative imaging, particularly MRI or CT, plays a key role in assessing mass size and its relationship to surrounding structures, guiding the surgical approach. In some cases, minimally invasive techniques may be used, but larger masses require open surgery [39].

Sacral anomalies such as agenesis or hypoplasia can lead to functional challenges like bowel and urinary dysfunction. Management may involve sacral reconstruction or spinal stabilization in severe cases. For tethered cord syndrome, surgical detethering of the spinal cord is recommended to prevent neurological damage [40].Postoperative care is crucial, including monitoring for complications like infection, and providing long-term management for bowel and urinary dysfunction. Regular follow-up visits, imaging studies, and assessments of bowel function are essential to manage and prevent further complications [41]. A multidisciplinary team of pediatric surgeons, genetic counselors, urologists, neurologists, and physical therapists is key to managing the diverse aspects of CS [42].Long-term monitoring is necessary to address ongoing issues such as recurrent presacral masses and neurological complications. Genetic counseling and testing play an integral role, providing families with important information about inheritance, recurrence risks, and reproductive options [43,44].

**Prognosis and Long-Term Outcomes**

Currarino Syndrome generally has a favorable prognosis in terms of survival, especially with early diagnosis and surgical intervention. Most individuals with CS can expect to live into adulthood, although the quality of life may be impacted by associated complications. The presence of severe sacral deformities or complications from presacral masses can increase the risk of long-term morbidity, but these issues are often manageable with timely medical and surgical care. In the absence of major complications such as malignancy in the presacral mass, individuals with CS can have a near-normal life expectancy [45].Bowel function is a major concern for patients with Currarino Syndrome, particularly those with significant anorectal malformations. The severity of the malformation and the timing of surgical intervention play a critical role in the patient's long-term bowel function. In many cases, individuals undergo reconstructive surgeries, such as pull-through procedures, to restore gastrointestinal continuity. However, despite successful surgery, fecal incontinence or constipation may persist in some patients, requiring long-term management strategies such as bowel training or the use of enemas. Many patients with CS require ongoing care and support from pediatric gastroenterologists and physical therapists to optimize bowel function and manage incontinence [46].

Urinary dysfunction is common in individuals with Currarino Syndrome, particularly in those with sacral deformities or spinal cord involvement. The nature of sacral malformations can disrupt the neural control of the bladder, leading to issues such as urinary incontinence, urinary retention, or recurrent urinary tract infections. Urologic interventions may be required, such as bladder augmentation or catheterization programs, to manage these complications. Regular follow-up with a urologist is essential to monitor for changes in urinary function and to intervene as needed to prevent long-term kidney damage or infections [47].Neurological outcomes in Currarino Syndrome are primarily influenced by the presence of tethered cord syndrome or other spinal malformations. These conditions can lead to progressive neurological deficits, such as weakness, sensory loss, or bladder and bowel dysfunction. Early surgical intervention to release a tethered cord can significantly improve neurological outcomes and prevent further damage to the spinal cord. However, even with surgical detethering, some individuals may experience long-term neurological deficits due to underlying sacral deformities. Long-term monitoring for neurological changes is necessary, particularly as patients transition into adulthood [48].

Most children with Currarino Syndrome exhibit normal cognitive development, although some may experience developmental delays, particularly in cases with more severe neurological involvement. Spinal malformations or tethered cord syndrome can affect motor development, leading to delays in walking or fine motor skills. However, with appropriate physical therapy and early intervention, many children with CS can achieve functional independence in adulthood. Cognitive delays are rare but can occur in individuals with severe neurological involvement, requiring specialized educational support and therapies [49].One of the long-term concerns for individuals with Currarino Syndrome is the potential for recurrence of presacral masses, although most presacral masses are benign. However, the possibility of malignant transformation of a presacral mass, although rare, requires careful monitoring. Imaging studies, such as MRI and CT scans, are essential for ongoing surveillance to detect any recurrence or changes in the mass that may suggest malignancy. If malignant transformation occurs, surgical resection, possibly combined with chemotherapy or radiation, may be necessary to improve the patient's prognosis. Regular follow-up care with imaging is crucial to detect changes early and to intervene if required [50].

The psychosocial impact of Currarino Syndrome can be significant, particularly for individuals with visible deformities or long-term functional challenges. Issues related to incontinence, mobility, and neurological dysfunction can affect social interactions and self-esteem, particularly in children and adolescents. Psychosocial support, including counseling and support groups, plays a vital role in helping patients and their families navigate the emotional challenges of living with a chronic condition. Additionally, educational support may be necessary for children with developmental or cognitive delays. Overall, with appropriate support, many individuals with CS can lead fulfilling lives, although ongoing support and intervention are often required [51].Long-term follow-up care is essential for individuals with Currarino Syndrome to monitor for complications and ensure the best possible outcomes. Regular visits to pediatric surgeons, urologists, neurologists, and gastroenterologists are recommended to address any emerging issues. Imaging studies should be performed periodically to monitor for changes in the presacral mass, sacral deformities, or other associated conditions. Early intervention is critical to addressing complications and preventing further deterioration of health. With ongoing care, individuals with CS can manage their symptoms and lead productive lives, although the need for regular healthcare visits remains a significant part of their long-term care plan [52].

**Genetic Counseling and Family Implications**

Genetic counseling plays a critical role in the management of Currarino Syndrome (CS), especially for families with a known history of the condition. Families affected by CS benefit from understanding the inheritance pattern of the syndrome, which is autosomal dominant. This means there is a 50% chance that an affected individual will pass the mutation to their offspring. Genetic counselors provide essential information about the likelihood of recurrence in future pregnancies and discuss available genetic testing options to assess family members for the MNX1 mutation [53].In addition to inheritance patterns, genetic counseling helps families navigate the emotional and psychological aspects of having a child with a congenital disorder. The counselor provides support and guidance to parents, addressing concerns related to potential developmental delays, long-term complications, and the impact on family dynamics. Counseling can also offer advice on family planning and reproductive choices, including options like prenatal genetic testing or preimplantation genetic diagnosis for those at risk [54].For families with young children or newly diagnosed cases of CS, genetic counselors provide resources on available medical interventions, surgical options, and long-term monitoring strategies. Psychosocial support is also crucial to help families cope with the challenges of managing a chronic condition [55]. Understanding the genetic basis of CS is empowering for families, ensuring informed decision-making and planning for both medical care and future family considerations [56,57].Genetic counseling not only assists with understanding risks but also aids families in forming realistic expectations about their child's health trajectory and potential outcomes [58,59].

**Table 1: Recent Advances and Future Directions in Currarino Syndrome Research**

| Research Area | Future Directions & Research Gaps | References |
|---|---|---|
| **Genetic Understanding of CS** | Further investigation into additional genetic factors beyond **MNX1** that contribute to Currarino Syndrome. | [60] |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Imaging Techniques** | Development of more advanced imaging modalities for better visualization and monitoring of presacral masses and sacral anomalies. | [61] |
| **Surgical Approaches and Techniques** | Development of less invasive surgical techniques and personalized approaches for treating anorectal malformations and presacral masses. | [62] |
| **Long-Term Monitoring and Follow-Up** | Establishment of standardized protocols for long-term monitoring of patients with CS to prevent complications and improve outcomes. | [63] |
| **Genetic Screening and Early Diagnosis** | Expansion of genetic testing and prenatal screening methods to identify CS earlier and enable timely interventions. | [64] |
| **Neurological Aspects of CS** | Exploration of the role of spinal cord and neurological health in the progression of CS, particularly with tethered cord syndrome. | [64] |
| **Psychosocial Impact and Quality of Life** | Investigating the long-term psychosocial and emotional impacts on individuals with CS, especially related to incontinence and mobility issues. | [65] |

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Currarino Syndrome (CS) is a rare genetic disorder primarily caused by mutations in the MNX1 gene, leading to a characteristic triad of anorectal malformations, sacral anomalies, and presacral masses. Although the condition follows an autosomal dominant inheritance pattern, the clinical presentation is highly variable, with patients experiencing different severities of symptoms. Early diagnosis through imaging techniques, including MRI and CT scans, is crucial for identifying sacral malformations and presacral masses, which are central to the diagnosis of CS. Genetic testing for MNX1 mutations aids in confirming the diagnosis and providing families with important information about inheritance and recurrence risks. The management of CS is multidisciplinary, including surgical interventions to correct anorectal malformations and remove presacral masses, followed by long-term monitoring to manage potential complications. Genetic counseling plays a vital role in helping families understand the genetic basis of the disorder, providing insights into reproductive options and family planning. As research progresses, further understanding of additional genetic factors contributing to CS will likely enhance early diagnosis, therapeutic strategies, and long-term outcomes for affected individuals. Continued advancements in genetics, imaging, and surgical techniques hold promise for improving the quality of life for individuals with CS.

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