

## Images in clinical medicine



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**Received:** 22 Sep 2025 - **Accepted:** 29 Sep 2025 - **Published:** 17 Oct 2025

**Keywords:** *Sirenomelia*, C-reactive protein, newborn, ectromelia, congenital malformation

**Funding:** This work received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

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**Cite this article:** Fatima Zahraa Belhaj et al. *Sirenomelia* in a preterm neonate: a rare and lethal congenital anomaly. Pan African Medical Journal. 2025;52(77). 10.11604/pamj.2025.52.77.49478

**Available online at:** <https://www.panafrican-med-journal.com//content/article/52/77/full>

## *Sirenomelia* in a preterm neonate: a rare and lethal congenital anomaly

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## Image in medicine

A preterm neonate, born at 35 weeks of gestation with a birth weight of 2100 g and an Apgar score of 8/10, was delivered after an unmonitored pregnancy. Clinical examination revealed a single tapered appendage replacing the lower limbs, with absent musculature and soft tissue, highly suggestive of *sirenomelia* "mermaid syndrome". External genital organs were not identifiable. Complementary investigations demonstrated severe visceral malformations: renal ultrasound revealed bilateral renal agenesis, while echocardiography showed complex congenital

heart anomalies. No craniofacial dysmorphism was noted. The infant initially presented with respiratory distress requiring CPAP support. At 12 hours of life, clinical deterioration occurred with temperature instability, feeding intolerance, and increasing oxygen requirements. Laboratory investigations showed a marked rise in C-reactive protein with progressive thrombocytopenia.

Despite the initiation of broad-spectrum intravenous antibiotics, the clinical course rapidly worsened. The newborn developed refractory septic shock compounded by severe renal failure with hydro-electrolyte disturbances, leading to multiorgan dysfunction and death at 48 hours of life.



**Figure 1:** *sirenomelia* in a preterm neonate showing a single fused lower-limb appendage, absence of external genitalia, and associated visceral malformations