Question: 106

A mother brings in her 7-year-old daughter because she is worried that the little girl will go through puberty too early. The woman tells you that she reached menarche at 9 years of age, and this was a difficult experience. The child's father, on the other hand, had his growth spurt at the end of high school.

Of the following, this girl is MOST likely to have early menarche if the physical examination reveals

A. a body mass index greater than the 85th percentile
B. adult body odor
C. breast tissue
D. facial acne
E. pubic hair
Age at puberty has a heritable component. In some families, the inheritance may be autosomal dominant; in others, it seems polygenic. A 7-year-old girl whose mother reached menarche at an early age and whose father was delayed in puberty, as described in the vignette, could have either early or late puberty. However, early menarche at, for example, 9 years of age, would be associated with some signs of breast development (thelarche) by 7 years of age.

Higher body mass index is associated with early puberty in girls, but not in boys. Adult body odor, pubic hair, and acne are all signs of adrenal puberty (adrenarche or pubarche). This occurs more or less independently of gonadal puberty, which, in girls, is identified clinically by the beginning of breast budding (thelarche).

References:


