

Parents' anguish for son who cannot smile

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However happy 11-month-old Isaac Hughes feels inside, it will never show on his face - because he cannot smile.

He has Moebius syndrome, a condition that affects only 200 people in Britain and means he cannot smile, blink or show any facial expression.

His parents, Ceri and Philip Hughes, of Mold, North Wales, spent months seeking a diagnosis for their son, who was unable to feed properly and appeared unresponsive.

"Every parent wants their child to be a happy, smiley person and when we were choosing names we settled on Isaac because it means 'He will laugh' in Hebrew," said Mrs Hughes.

"How ironic that has turned out to be. Every day I hoped to see a smile from Isaac but, despite trying all the usual peek-a-boo games, there was not even a flicker of a smile. He had chuckled a few times and even laughed, although it sounded a bit strange, but no smile lit up his face."



Isaac Hughes: Moebius syndrome

When Moebius syndrome was finally diagnosed, Mr Hughes, an accountant, and his wife, who is well-known in the Chester business community, discovered that there was no consultant specialising in it and no research programme.

They have now joined other families in the [Moebius Research Trust](#) to raise £250,000 to fund research that may identify the cause of the condition and pinpoint possible treatments.

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