Vitiligo where areas of growing skin lose their colour leaving white patches on the skin, what is the pathogenesis?

A) Congenital lack of pigmentation  
B) Increase in the number of melanocytes  
C) Autoimmune destruction of melanocytes  
D) Pigment loss due to steroid use  
E) Viral infection damaging epithelium

Answer

MCQ / ClinicalKey AnswerCard

Vitiligo is a common chronic autoimmune condition that causes melanocyte destruction and subsequent patchy depigmentation of the skin and hair.

There are two main patterns of vitiligo:
- Nonsegmental vitiligo – the more common form, affecting the body randomly
- Segmental vitiligo - less common and remaining affecting segments at a time

Skin melanocytes produce melanin give the skin it’s colour due to the melanin pigment. If there is a problem with melanin production, then the skin is de-pigmented, turning white.