Supracondylar Process Congenitalis Of The Femur

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Abstract

The author reports a case of supracondylar process of the femur in a patient who presented with trauma to the left knee in a road traffic accident. The patient was not symptomatic and the process was detected incidentally while doing the trauma series radiographs. Hence no intervention was suggested to the patient.

Introduction

Supracondylar process of the humerus is not an uncommon finding, with most of the cases found incidentally while radiographs are done for trauma. The process with its attached Struthers ligament may compress the median nerve causing symptoms and signs of entrapment neuropathy or claudication in the forearm muscles on exertion.[1,2] There is only one case report of supracondylar process of the femur in the English medical literature.[1] Cohen reported an exostosis of the medial distal femoral shaft, which he described as “supracondylar process congenitalis of the femur”.[1]

These are thought to be vestigial processes which are present in the climbing mammals.

The supracondylar process of the humerus with the attached Struthers ligament is the remnant of a vestigial muscle seen in certain climbing mammals.[2] In various mammals the semimembranosus muscle is inserted to the medial epicondylar process of the femur.[1] Dwight refuted this proposition of ancestral origin as early as 1895, and commented “the existence of a clearly marked process in a common ancestor and to assume that its great development in the anomaly is an accident of no significance”. [3] He also mentioned that this is probably accidental, possessing no significance.[3]

A differential diagnosis which is considered is osteochondroma of the distal femur. Osteochondroma is distinguishable radiologically as they show continuity with the underlying medullary cavity of the bone of origin.[1,4] In our case the swelling was arising from the surface of the bone and there was no medullary continuity. Moreover there was no cartilage cap unlike in osteochondroma.

Since this was an incidental finding during imaging for skeletal trauma, an anomaly of which the patient was not aware of, no treatment was offered.

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest to declare.

Conclusion

Supracondylar process of femur is a rare anomaly, which is detected as an incidental finding while radiographs are taken for some other purpose.

Authors contribution(s)

SS Suresh was responsible for diagnosis, management of the case, preparation of manuscript.
References

Illustrations

Illustration 1

X-ray showing supracondylar process [white arrow]

Illustration 2

CT scan showing no medullary continuity of the process with host bone.
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