De novo formation of a symptomatic arachnoid cyst in an adult

Figure 1 De novo formation of the cyst on CT brain

(A) CT from 4 years ago does not show any evidence of the cyst. (B) The most recent CT reveals presence of a de novo cyst in the posterior fossa.

A 49-year-old man presented with 7 months of progressive ataxic gait. He had a minor head injury 4 years prior, with unremarkable imaging (figure 1A). There was no further head trauma, but a repeat study at presentation demonstrated a posterior fossa cyst with mass effect and early hydrocephalus (figure 1B). Intraoperative findings confirmed the lesion was an arachnoid cyst (figure 2). Symptoms improved postoperatively.

The de novo formation of an arachnoid cyst in an adult highlights that these are not exclusively congenital lesions.¹ A possible mechanism is traumatic microsplitting of the arachnoid membranes at the time of head injury that can allow for accumulation of CSF within.²

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Figure 2 Intraoperative findings

Intraoperative pictures demonstrate (A) exposure and (B) opening of the cyst wall, followed by fenestration of the cyst into (C) the subarachnoid space and (D, E) the fourth ventricle.

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