Teaching NeuroImages: Spinal cord infarct due to fibrocartilaginous embolism in an adolescent

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Figure Spine imaging

Sagittal T2 imaging (A) of the cervical spine demonstrates degenerative changes at the C6-7 disk interspace (thin arrow) and T2 hyperintensity is identified in the ventral cervical cord opposite to C5 and C6 (thick arrow). Sagittal diffusion-weighted imaging (B) reveals restricted diffusion abnormality in the ventral cervical cord extending from the C4-5 level (thin arrow) down to the C6-7 level (thick arrow). Axial T2 imaging (C) at the level of the C5-6 disk space shows T2 hyperintensity in the anterior, left greater than right, cervical cord (thin arrows).

A 15-year-old healthy, active girl presented with acute bilateral upper extremity tingling and hand weakness while playing golf; within several hours, she developed numbness and weakness in all limbs. She denied preceding trauma and bowel/bladder incontinence. Examination showed global weakness, normal tone and reflexes, a C5 sensory level, and decreased light touch/temperature/pinprick in all limbs. Neuroimaging revealed an anterior spinal artery cervical cord infarct (figure), along with a degenerative disk, attributed to fibrocartilaginous embolism.

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Go to Neurology.org/N for full disclosures. Funding information and disclosures deemed relevant by the authors, if any, are provided at the end of the article.

Despite being a rare cause of spinal cord infarct, adult and pediatric neurologists should include fibrocartilaginous embolism as a possible etiology in patients with ischemic myelopathy.^{1,2}

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Disclosure

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Appendix Authors

Name	Location	Contribution
Fábio A. Nascimento, MD	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Designed and conceptualized study, analyzed and interpreted the data, drafted the manuscript

Appendix (continued)

Name	Location	Contribution
Wilfreda Lindsey, MD	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Analyzed and interpreted the data, drafted the manuscript
Jill V. Hunter, MD	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Analyzed and interpreted the data, revised the manuscript
Sarah Risen, MD	Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX	Designed and conceptualized study, analyzed and interpreted the data, revised the manuscript, supervised the study, final approval

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