

ISOLATED BILATERAL FRACTURES OF THE TWO RADIAL HEADS - A CASE REPORT

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1-INTRODUCTION

Radial head fractures are common joint fractures of the elbow. They affect the active and young subject, most often following a fall or a high-energy trauma, they represent 33% of elbow fractures and 5.4% of all fractures.^[1,2,3,4,5] Treatment depends on the type of fracture, the degree of displacement and the associated lesions ; The functional prognosis is affected by the increased risk of stiffening of the elbow even after mild trauma, hence the value of early rehabilitation; Bilateral radial head fractures are rare fractures, it was difficult for us to find similar cases in the literature, one case was described by Kay in a 13-year-old child (6); We report here the case of a patient suffering from a trauma to the elbow causing a fracture of the two radial heads. The aim of our work is to report our experience and to highlight the need for a careful examination of the traumatized limb.

KEYWORDS: Elbow, fracture, radial head.

2- VISUAL CASE DISCUSSION

We report the case of a 55-year-old male patient, official soldier, right-handed person, with no particular pathological history, victim of a work accident: fall from a high place of about 5m with landing on the two upper limbs, elbow extended and pronated, causing closed trauma to both elbows, clinical examination noted edema and pain on palpation and mobilization of both elbows (prono-supination), especially in relation to the radial head; We performed frontal and lateral radiographs of the two elbows which demonstrated a bilateral fracture of the radial heads classified as type I on the left (fig 1, fig 4) and type I on the right (fig 2, fig 3) according to the classification of Mason.

We opted for orthopedic treatment of the two fractures with a circular brachio ante brachio palmar plaster for a period of 4 weeks followed by functional rehabilitation of both elbows for 2 months; We noted a good clinical and radiological evolution after 2 months of follow-up, with complete recovery of the function of both elbows (flexion at 120°, extension at 0°, pronation at 85°, supination at 85°)

3- Questions and answers**Question 1**

The most common complication of radial head fractures is:

- 1- Pseudarthrosis
- 2- Vicious callus

3- Stiffness of the elbow

4- Radio cubitondylar arthrosis

Correct answer: 3

The stiffness of the elbow is the most frequent complication of fractures of the 2 radial heads and this is explained by the immobilization of the elbow by a brachio ante brachio palmar splint or by a circular brachio ante brachio palmar plaster whatever the treatment envisaged orthopedic or surgical, hence the interest of early functional rehabilitation.

Question 2

Treatment of radial head fractures is based on:

- 1- Orthopedic treatment
- 2- Surgical treatment by screwing the radial head
- 3- Surgical treatment by resection of the radial head
- 4- Surgical treatment by screwed plate

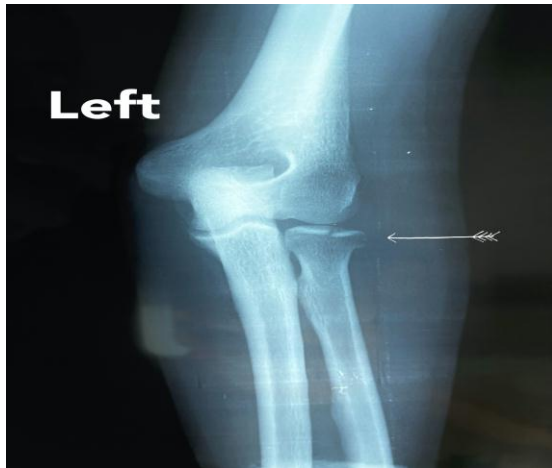


Fig. 1: Front X-ray of Left elbow showing mason I radial head fracture indicated by the white arrow.



Fig. 2: Facial x-ray of the right elbow showing non-displaced fracture of the radial mason head I indicated by the white arrow.

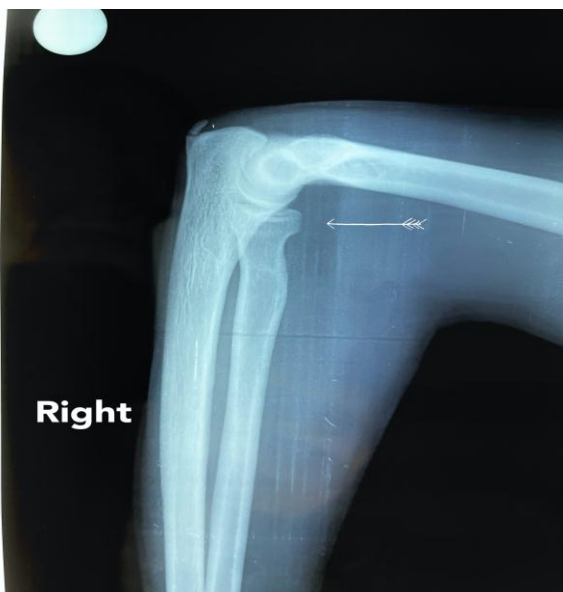


Fig. 3: Right elbow profile x-ray showing an undisplaced mason I radial head fracture indicated by the white arrow.

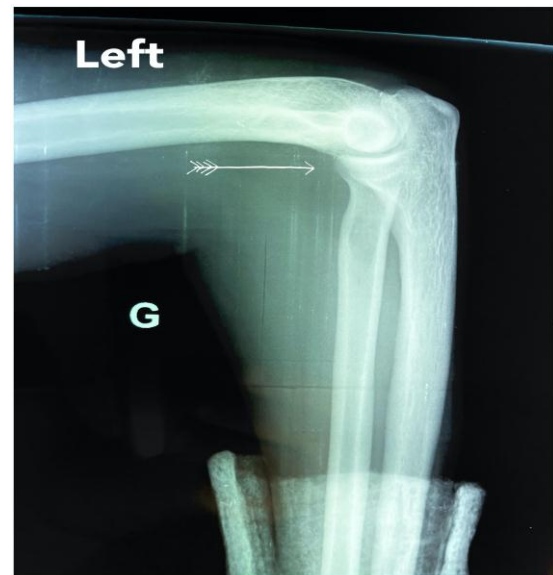


Fig. 4: Left elbow profile x-ray showing an undisplaced fracture of the radial mason head I indicated by the white arrow.

Correct answer: 1 - 2 - 3

The treatment of radial head fractures depends on the type of fracture, a non-displaced fracture can be treated orthopedically while a displaced fracture will be treated by screwing if a simple non-displaced fracture or by resection of the head if the joint fracture.

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