

A WANDERING HARRINGTON ROD IN FOOT: AN UNUSUAL CASE PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT : - A rare case of a Harrington rod migrating to the left foot is reported in this paper.

KEYWORDS :- Harrington rod, left foot.

INTRODUCTION

Migration of Harrington rod is reported in few cases to adjacent structure such as abdominal wall and rectum (Fichthett *et al.*, 2008 and Hirno *et al.*, 2007). Here we came across a rare case of it migrating to left foot and presenting as mass in left foot. Such atypical presentations are rare and should be thoroughly examined.

CASE REPORT

A 38 year old Asian Indian male presented to the surgical team on 5th Oct. 2008 with 2 day history of sharp pain in the left foot and a palpable mass. He had no history of trauma to foot and a tender 9 x 1 cm hard mass was palpable in the left foot along the medial aspect extending 4 cm above and in front of medial malleolus to 3 cm below it [figure-1]. X-ray revealed metallic rod like structure in soft tissue [figure-2]. Patient gave history of spinal surgery for trauma 12 years back with x-ray showing 8 screws and 2 rods [figure-3]. Fresh spine x-ray revealed 8 screws and no rods [figure-4]. This led us with the conclusion that one of the rod must have migrated to left foot through the subcutaneous plane. Whole body scan was done to look for missing 2nd rod. But the result was fruitless. Successful removal of entire rod was done [figure- 5].



Figure - 2



Figure - 1

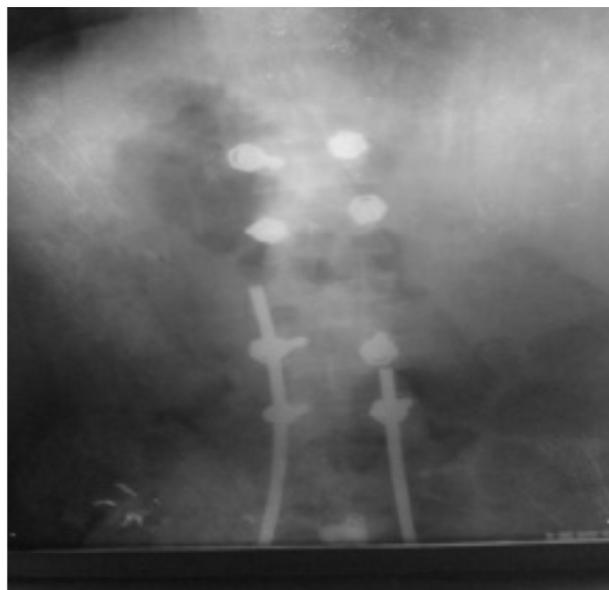


Figure - 3



Figure - 4

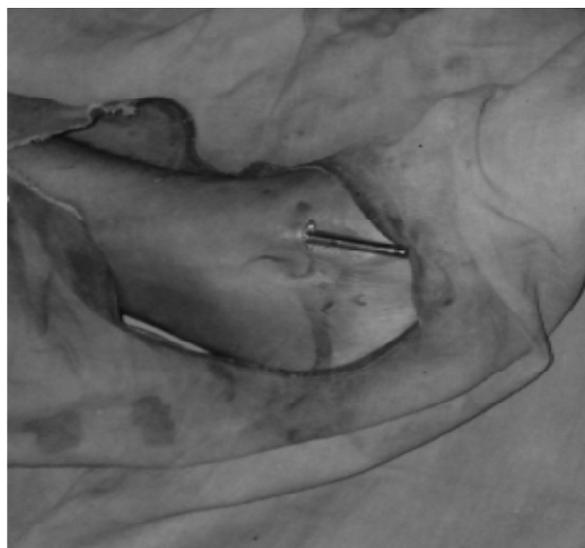


Figure - 5

DISCUSSION

Fixation is a common method employed in the surgical correction of spinal trauma. Partial migration within the spinal canal and rotation of Harrington rods have been recognised as long-term complications of spinal fixation techniques (McCarthy *et al.*, 1988). Rod fracture has been reported at between 2–11% and loosening of fixation points is usually reported in 7% of all rods. Migration is usually minimal, resulting in proximal or distal movement within the spinal column (DeWald and Stanley, 2006 and Shem, 2005). Our patient had a road traffic accident 12 years back for which he had undergone surgical correction prior to his presentation. The follow up x-ray reveals loosening of both the rods, later on patient presented with first rod in left foot and second still a dilemma.

CONCLUSION

This case report emphasizes the importance of careful surgical technique and long-term follow up for patients who

had undergone spinal instrumentation surgery and surgeons must be vigilant to the fact that odd and unusual scenarios occasionally may arise.

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