

THE EYES DON'T SEE WHAT THE MIND DOESN'T KNOW: MISSING A CARPOMETACARPAL JOINT DISLOCATION

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Introduction: Carpometacarpal joint (CMC) dislocations account for less than one percent of all injuries of the hand and wrist. These injuries are easily and frequently overlooked or misdiagnosed. Delay in managing CMC joint dislocations may lead to chronic residual pain and poor functional outcome.

Discussion: A 17-year-old gentleman presented with left hand pain following a road traffic accident and examination revealed marked swelling and bruises over his left hand. He was initially diagnosed with closed intraarticular fracture of base of left fourth metacarpal bone and base of middle phalanx of left fifth finger. The diagnosis of second to fifth CMC joint dislocation was missed and was only noticed the next day after a review by a more senior orthopaedic surgeon. Manipulation and closed reduction was done on the same day. Stability was achieved after fixation using multiple Kirschner wires and supported with volar POP slab. Postoperative recovery was successful and he was able to return to work 3 months later.

Conclusion: Early diagnosis of CMC joint dislocation requires high index of suspicion and detailed clinical examination. Poor management of this injury may lead to complications such as chronic pain, degenerative arthritis, and impaired grip strength.