

ADOLESCENT LIMBUS VERTEBRA MIMICKING SPONDYLODISCITIS

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Introduction: Adolescents complaining of chronic back pain should be suspected for limbus vertebra in one of our differential diagnosis once laboratory markers suggestive inflammatory condition has been ruled out. Limbus vertebra is a condition characterized by marginal interosseous herniation of the nucleus pulposus. It comes from a defect under the ring apophysis or in vertebral endplate during the skeletal development stage¹

Discussion: We are reporting a case of 15 years old boy who was active in sport, complaining of lower back pain for the past 1 year. Patient denied any history of trauma, fever or contact with TB patient. Clinically, he has localized tenderness at lower thoracic and upper lumbar region with no neurological deficit. Other systemic reviews and laboratory markers suggestive tumor or infections were unremarkable. However, the plain radiograph showed superior and inferior endplate erosion involving the T11, T12 and L1 vertebrae, hence warranting for MRI spine to look for evidence of spondylodiscitis.

Conclusion: Limbus vertebra causes non specific symptoms like low back pain, back pain, muscle spasms and sometimes radiculopathy. It is frequently confused with vertebral fracture, infection, schmorl nodule or tumour². The commonest type of the disease occur at the anterior aspect of the vertebral body. Posterior limbus vertebra is far less common but will have risk of injuring the adjacent spinal roots or cord. It is a rare disease or perhaps under reported in Malaysia. It should not be missed diagnose because most of the symptoms improved with analgesia and physiotherapy.