

POST SURGICAL TRANSITORY INFERIOR SUBLUXATION OF SHOULDER IN PAEDIATRICS

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INTRODUCTION:

Transient postoperative inferior subluxation of shoulder is rare and may occur following trauma and surgery. It is important to recognize this incident to avoid unnecessary evaluations and reduction maneuvers. We report a patient with closed fracture surgical neck of right humerus with shoulder joint subluxation and closed distal end right radius which was treated with closed manipulative reduction and k wiring proximal right humerus.

REPORT:

A 16 years old girl presented with post traumatic proximal right humerus fracture and distal end right radius fracture treated conservatively in view of non displaced fracture however noted right shoulder subluxated on day 3 post trauma. She underwent closed manipulative reduction and k wiring right proximal humerus. Postoperative X-ray showed an inferior subluxation of right shoulder. She was treated with right arm sling and shoulder strap. In addition, she had been performing right shoulder isometric exercises after callous formation is seen in 2/52 and k wires removed. 3 months later, X-ray showed united fracture of right proximal humerus with complete reduction of right shoulder.

Figure 1: Initial Xray shows disruption for right shoulder's Shenton's line.

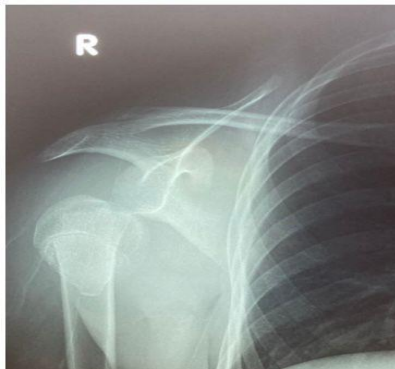
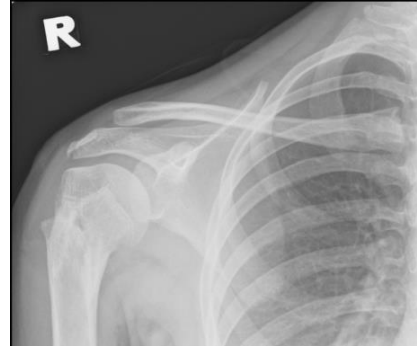


Figure 2: Recent X-ray shows united fracture of proximal right humerus with complete reduction of humeral head



CONCLUSION:

Treatment of inferior subluxation of the humeral head requires supporting the upper limb when not exercising and instituting isometric exercises. There is no need for reduction maneuvers or surgery.

Pathophysiology includes atony of the deltoid and rotator cuff muscles. Loose ligaments allow the humeral head to descend. Loss of negative intraarticular pressure is an additional factor when the shoulder joint has been opened by injury or surgery. After the muscle tone returns, the subluxation disappears and the prognosis is excellent.

The main value in recognizing transitory inferior subluxation of the humeral head is to avoid painful, unnecessary diagnostic test and maneuvers. James¹ stated that inferior subluxation resolved by 6 weeks in 92% of patients with humeral fractures. It is a temporary and benign asymptomatic condition.

REFERENCES:

1. Cotton FJ Subluxation of the shoulder downward Boston Med Surg J 1921. 185 405-7