Case Report

Bilateral Insufficiency Fracture of the Pelvis Following THA: A Case Report

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Insufficiency fracture is of the stress fractures and is caused by repetitive stress on fragile bone. Insufficiency fractures of pubic rami are rare occurrences in association with total hip arthroplasty (THA). Postoperative stress fractures occur due to increase of patients activity following years of disability. The physician should consider the possibility of a pelvic insufficiency fracture in patients with RA after THA, if the patients present with groin pain. We demonstrate here the first case of bilateral insufficiency fracture of pubic rami and iliac bone following THA.

1. Introduction

THA is effective for decreasing pain and improving the loss of function. Acute hip pain within the first few years after THA is unusual when the components are correctly positioned. The differential diagnosis, dislocation, infection, and periarticular bursitis or tendinitis, are considered. Insufficiency fracture around components also should be considered as part of differential diagnosis.

Several reports showed cases of insufficiency fracture of pubic rami after THA [1–3]. However, insufficiency fracture of bilateral pubic rami and iliac bone following THA has never been reported. Here, we report a case of a patient who complained of bilateral pelvic pain following bilateral THA who was found to have bilateral insufficiency fractures of pubic rami and iliac bone.

2. Case Report

A 62-year-old woman suffering from rheumatoid arthritis (RA) underwent a left THA in 2007 and a right revision THA in 2009. The patient was treated with various doses of glucocorticoid for long term. After surgery, she was able to walk without support. However, ten months postoperatively, she presented with complaints of left groin pain that initially was associated with physical therapy sessions. The symptoms became more constant. She denied a history of a fall or of another traumatic event. Radiographs, at that time, did not show any significant findings. She was treated with anti-inflammatory medication and weight-bearing with use of a cane in the right hand. Over the next 2 months, the left groin pain was disappeared. After 4 month, the left pubic pain was recurrent. She did weight-bearing with use of a cane in the right hand again. However, she presented right groin pain several days later. Symptoms were worse with weight bearing and walking. Furthermore, several days later, both sides of buttck pain were presented and unable to walk.

Radiographs showed fractures of both pubic rami. Computed tomography (CT) showed bilateral fracture of pubic rami and iliac bone (Figures 1 and 2). Evaluation for metabolic bone disease was performed. There was no significant evidence evaluated by blood examination.

She was admitted to our hospital and took bed rest for 1 month and then used walker for 2 month. By this time, all symptoms had subsided.

3. Discussion

Stress fractures are classified into three subgroups: fatigue fracture caused by repetitive stress for normal bone, insuf-
Most pelvic insufficiency fractures occur in women, particularly those with osteoporotic bone. The patients have impaired activity levels prior to THA. After surgery, many of these patients are pain free and get activity at a much higher level than preoperatively. Therefore, they are susceptible to the development of an insufficiency fracture if the bone quality is poor. In our case, the mechanism of fracture is thought as follows. Firstly, the insufficiency fracture of left pubic rami occurred due to daily activity. The patient was placed on limited weight-bearing, with use of a cane in the right hand. This increased the stress on the right side, and the fracture of right pubic rami was occurred. Both sides of pubic fracture increased the stress on both iliac bone, and the fractures of both iliac bones were caused.

Insufficiency fractures are differentiated from acute fractures, which occur early in the postoperative period as a result of press-fit insertion of cementless acetabular components in osteopenic bone [10].

The physician should consider the possibility of a pelvic insufficiency fracture in patients with RA after THA. If the patient presents with groin pain, the patient should be treated with weight-bearing as conservative management. However, pelvic discontinuity by both pubic rami and iliac bone fracture occurred in our case; even we recommended weight-bearing at the time of initial fracture of left pubic rami. We reported the first case of bilateral insufficiency fracture of pubic rami and iliac bone following THA.

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References


