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Title: Diskogenic bony spur as a cause of intractable intracranial hypotension headache: case report and review of the literature

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Headache attributed to spontaneous intracranial hypotension can be disabling to patients and intractable to medical management and repeated epidural blood patches. Spinal disk disease is a well-known common cause of back pain; however, diskogenic bony spurs can be sharp enough to cause a dural tear and a subsequent intractable headache due to intracranial hypotension. In this case report we highlight the importance of identifying a likely under-recognized cause of spontaneous intracranial hypotension.

Case description:

We report a case of 40 years old gentleman presented with intractable headache attributed intracranial hypotension caused by a bony spur cutting the dural surface at the thoracic level. Bony spur was identified at the level of the leak on MRI, plane CT scan and CT myelography. Neurosurgical exploration revealed dural tear caused by sharp bony spur. The bony spur was removed and the dural tear was successfully sealed with glue. The patient had a complete resolution of symptoms after the surgery.

Discussion:

We identified 19 cases in the literature, in addition to our case, of intractable headache due to CSF leak caused by diskogenic bony spurs (total of 20 cases). Bony spurs can be small enough and easily missed by spinal MRI. Plane CT scan can be helpful to identify bony spurs. However, Dynamic CT myelography is still indicated to localize the leak site as bony spurs can be present without CSF leak. Targeted surgical intervention with removal of bony spur and sealing of dural slit can immediately stop CSF leaking and subsequently relieves intracranial hypotension disabling symptoms.