Reviewer's report

Title: Absent cervical spine pedicle and associated congenital spinal abnormalities - a diagnostic trap in a setting of acute trauma: Case Report

Version: 2 Date: 19 September 2010

Reviewer: Aristomenis K Exadaktylos

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

This is an interesting case highlighting the problem of misdiagnosed plain (conventional) radiographs in the ER.

The cervical spine represents one the most vulnerable parts of the human body.

I must confess that I have been not aware of this abnormality, so this CR adds some new knowledge to my brain databank.

The only point I would consider is to discuss in more depth the choice of first line imaging.

According to the canadian c spine rules, the current gold standard for this kind of patient (high velocity/ ejection trauma) with neck pain (new or old does not matter) would have been CT scanning straight away, which would have spared everybody from this confusion.

Therefore I would make the point that this is

1) a rare abnormality, easily misinterpreted as a fracture

2) a case where CT scanning would have been first choice, introducing Canadian c spine rules.

3) giving some data on how many fractures are missed on plain c spine x-rays in general

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Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'