Reviewer's report

Title: The Swimmer's view - Does it really show what it is supposed to show? A retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 18 September 2007

Reviewer: Arvind Kulkarni

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Summary: The authors surveyed 100 trauma series x-rays of the cervical spine over a 2 year period. The authors conclude that Swimmer’s view does not identify cervico-thoracic junctional anatomy in 45% of cases. They recommend CT/MRI to be included in the trauma series.

Comments: My experience in the past confirms the fact that Swimmer’s views can sometimes miss cervico-thoracic junctional pathologies. Additional investigations such as CT/MRI need to be requested for. It would have been ideal if the authors had enumerated any lesions among the observed 100 cases that had been missed by x-rays but were picked up by CT/MRI. The other issue would be the rare possibility of missing cervicothoracic subluxations with CT/MRI since these investigations are done in supine non-weight bearing positions in which the subluxations can reduce. An important issue is the unavailability of advanced imaging facilities at all levels of care as well as the waiting list of appointments for the same. I feel that a high level of clinical suspicion is relevant in referring these patients for higher imaging studies to increase the sensitivity & specificity of the investigation.

Decision: Acceptable after the above concerns are addressed.