

A RARE AND LIFE THREATENING SCAPULOTHORACIC DISSOCIATION WITH ASSOCIATED CLAVICLE FRACTURE AND COMPLETE BRACHIAL PLEXUS INJURY

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Introduction: Scapulothoracic dissociation is a rare, potentially limb and life threatening injury of the shoulder girdle. The injury involving separation of scapula from the thorax along with the upper extremity. Majority of the patients have concomitant neurovascular injury and the prognosis is uniformly poor in such cases. We present a rare variant of scapulothoracic dissociation combined with fracture of clavicle associated with complete brachial plexus injury.

Discussion: A 19 years old man presented with right shoulder swelling and pain after a high speed motorcycle accident. The right shoulder and axilla was massive swelling with deformity over the clavicle region. Distal pulses were palpable. There was no sensation below the deltoid region and loss of motor function over right upper extremity. Right shoulder radiograph revealed fracture of clavicle and lateral translation of scapula. An anteroposterior radiograph of the chest revealed a lateral, upward displacement of the right scapula. An internal fixation of the clavicle was performed.

Conclusion: Scapulothoracic dissociation has been described as a "closed traumatic forequarter amputation" and is characterized by massive soft tissue swelling of the shoulder, lateral displacement of the scapula and neurovascular injury. Patients will have extensive soft tissue swelling around the shoulder and upper extremity. Complete brachial plexus avulsions are associated with a limited potential for functional recovery. The diagnosis of scapulothoracic dissociation should be considered in a patient with the high energy trauma to upper limb. The classic radiographic finding is a > 1-cm lateral displacement of the scapula on chest X-ray study with bilateral comparison of the medial scapular border from the midline thoracic spine. Initial treatment involves sling immobilization and analgesics. When present, vascular and neurologic injuries require emergent consultation.