

ISOLATED CAPITELLUM FRACTURE: A RARE FRACTURE ENTITY

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Introduction: Capitellum fractures are a rare entity in fractures around the elbow. However, these fractures have been associated with a more complex and extensive pattern than perceived on plain radiograph. This is a case report of a Type IV (McKee Modification) Capitellum fracture which is the rarest form of all the Capitellum fractures. This case report will highlight the presenting history, examination and investigations leading to the diagnosis and treatment of this patient. The outcome and measures taken to reduce the complications are also described.

Discussion: The patient had a history of slip and fall on outstretched hand with the elbow in semi-flexed position. She complained of immediate pain, swelling and mechanical block of the elbow. The initial radiograph showed the classical "double arch" sign, and a CT scan showed no other associated fractures. A lateral column approach was employed for better visualization and reduction of the fracture. Two size 2.4mm headless cannulated screws (Acumed Acutrak 2) was used to immobilize the trochlear and the capitellar components of the fracture under Image Intensifier control. Post-operative immobilization is with dorsal back slab with the elbow in 90 degrees of flexion. Post-operative radiograph showed anatomical reduction. The patient regained full range of motion within 6 weeks of operation with no complications.

Conclusion: The treatment of this rare fractures should be the prime area of upper limb surgeons and not general orthopaedic surgeons. This is to ensure the cases are not only treated fairly and expectantly, but to increase the exposure of the upper limb surgeon to this rare fracture. However, this is not the case in Malaysia as more and more general orthopaedic surgeons are "trying" their hand in upper limb surgery. Many studies have showed that treatment of rare conditions is best undertaken by the relevant subspecialty for the best outcome for the patient.