

A RARE CASE OF BERLOTTI'S SYNDROME WITH SURGICAL MANAGEMENT IN A YOUNG PATIENT : A CASE REPORT

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Introduction: Bertolotti's syndrome which affects at least 4% to 8% of the general population is also known as the lumbosacral transitional vertebra was first identified by Dr Mario Bertolotti in 1917. The abnormal vertebrae may produce lower back pain due to arthritic changes occurring at the site of pseudarthrosis

Results: A 27-year-old hospital staff presented to us in 2018 with a history of chronic low back pain since 2006 and was under specialist follow up for scoliosis. She claimed her pain worsened after her second pregnancy and a fall. The nature of her pain is radiating from her gluteal area down to the left lower limb and aggravated by movement affects her daily activity. Her pain score increased from 2/10 to 7/10. She denied any urinary or bowel incontinence. She had been taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and occasional opioids for more than 10 years for pain-relief. She was diagnosed as having Bertolotti's Syndrome. Between January and June 2020, she underwent two steroid injection at transverse process L5 and radiofrequency ablation. Physical examination revealed tenderness over the lower lumbosacral region. No motor and sensory deficits elicited. Plain radiograph of the lumbar sacral spine showed fusion of left L5 transverse process to the sacrum. Non-enhanced Computer Tomography (NECT) reported enlargement of L5, with pseudoarticulation and incomplete sacralization with impression of sacralization of L5 (Castellvi IIa). In view of long-standing debilitating pain with failure of non-invasive treatment, she undergone surgical excision of the pseudo-articulation of the left L5 transverse process with the sacrum.

Conclusion: Comprehensive assessment including detailed history taking, thorough physical examination and correlation with radiological imaging is very important for optimal treatment plan. If patient does not respond to local anaesthetic injection, surgical intervention provides better outcomes.