

IMAGES

Cervical spine injury after diving into water

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It is estimated that the annual incidence of traumatic spinal cord injury in Spain is of 30 cases per million inhabitants. Diving carelessly into shallow water is the cause of 5% of the spinal cord injuries reported. Between 80% and 90% of patients suffering spinal cord lesions caused by diving are between 15 and 25 years old and four out of five are males.

There are six types of injury mechanisms that can appear in combination: compression flexion (the most frequent type in cervical spine injuries caused by diving into shallow water), flexion disruption, compressive hyperextension, disruptive hyperextension, rotation and axial compression.

Early detection or suspicion of these fractures as well as adequate management at the site of the accident are extremely important for the patient's prognosis.

We present the case of a 21-year-old male with a cervical fracture of C5-C6 affecting the spinal cord after diving into the sea in a shallow area. The CT scan showed burst fracture of C6 penetrating the spinal canal and causing important stenosis as well as a fracture of the right lamina of the same vertebra (Figure 1). In addition, the patient presented a vertical fracture line that affected C5 vertebra in its antero-posterior axis, as well as a fracture of both laminae (Figure 2).

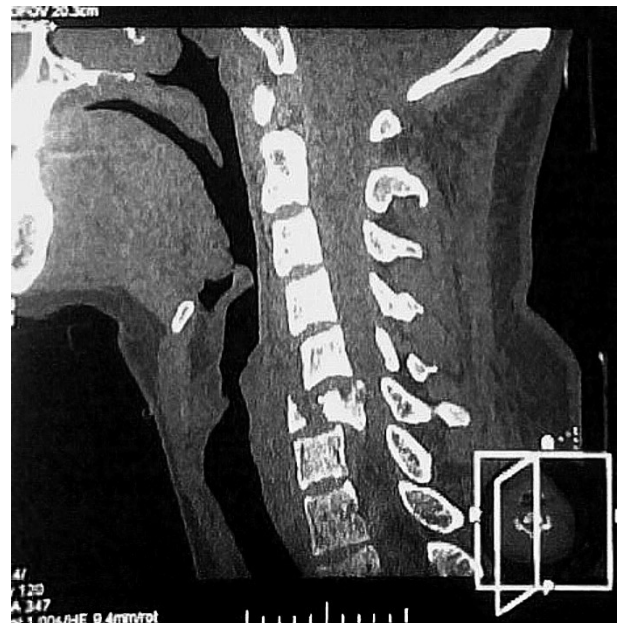


Figure 1. Burst fracture of C6 with spinal compromise.

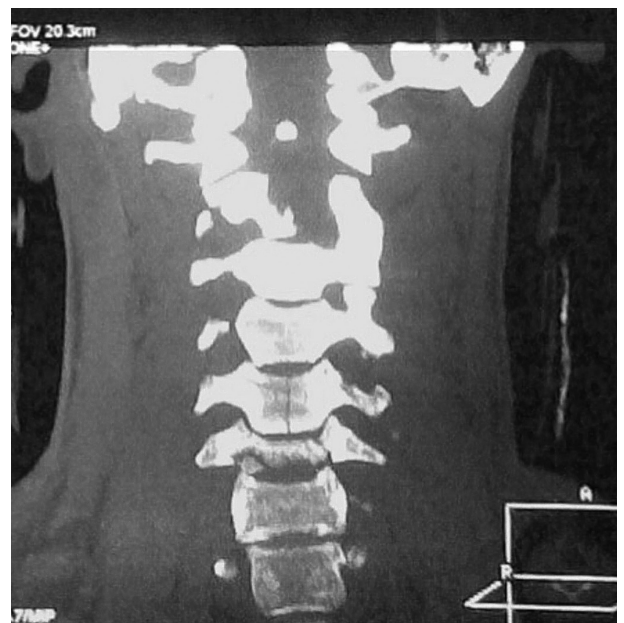


Figure 2. Vertical fracture line of C5 and of both laminae.

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