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The role of CT in diagnosis and treatment of distal tibial fractures with intra-articular involvement in children.

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Aim: Distal tibial fractures with intra-articular involvement during childhood are injuries with potentially severe complications if not treated promptly. Daily clinical practice indicates that sole use of plain radiographs may lead to misdiagnosis and subsequent erroneous selection of suitable treatment. The role of computed tomography (CT) in the classification and treatment decision of these injuries is unclear. This study aims to determine whether CT evaluation is required in the management of these fractures.

Patients and methods: We assessed 64 distal tibial fractures with intra-articular involvement on two separate occasions in a blinded study, in order to classify the fracture and decide the appropriate treatment approach. In the first part of the study, plain radiographs were evaluated in order to diagnose the type of the fracture and select the appropriate treatment. In the second part, CT scans were performed in the same patients in order to re-evaluate diagnosis and treatment. The study included fractures prior to physeal closure (Salter–Harris III and IV fractures, n = 32) as well as transitional fractures (J. Tillaux and triplane fractures, n = 32).

Results: According to plain radiographs, 31 patients were diagnosed with SH III fracture, 8 with SH IV, 9 with J. Tillaux and 16 with triplane fracture. Surgical treatment was decided in 18 patients and non- surgical in 46. After CT scan evaluation, 20 patients were diagnosed with SH III, 12 with SH IV, 9 with J. Tillaux, and 23 with triplane fracture. In this occasion the number of patients referred for surgical treatment raised to 42 leaving only 22 patients to be treated conservatively.

Conclusions: Computed tomography lead to changes in fracture classification and treatment decision. Treatment decision changed for 24 patients after CT evaluation. Treatment decision in patients with SH III and IV did not change significantly opposed to patients with transitional fractures, where CT scan had major impact on treatment decision. Despite the irradiation of immature skeleton and higher cost containment, this study indicates that patients with transitional

distal tibial fractures as well as patients with displaced SH III and IV fractures must undergo CT examination in order to make accurate diagnosis and select the appropriate treatment.

Kommentar

Baggrund: Denne artikel omhandler en væsentlig subgruppe af børnefrakturer, nemlig de distale intra-artikulære tibiafrakturer inklusiv epifisiolyser type SH3-4, triplanfrakturer og Tillauxfrakturer. Som det fremgår af artiklen, er det en forholdsvis hyppig skade involverende børns vækstzoner. Disse skader fører relativt hyppigt til varige skader på vækstzonene i form af hel eller delvis lukning af vækstzonerne. Dette kan medføre skæv vækst eller vækststop med inkongruens i led, deformiteter og/eller anisomeli. Artiklen har til formål, at undersøge om CT har en rolle i diagnostik og behandlingsplanlægning af disse frakturer.

Metode: I studiet inkluderes 64 intra-artikulære distal tibiafrakturer hos børn. Alle børn fik rutinemæssigt foretaget almindelig anteroposterior og lateral røntgenoptagelse og frakturerne blev klassificeret som SH-III epifisiolyser, SH-IV epifisiolyser, Tillauxfrakturer eller triplanfrakturer. Herefter fastslag erfaren kirurg den nødvendige behandling ud fra røntgenbillederne. Alle patienter fik herefter foretaget CT-skanning, frakturerne blev klassificeret på ny og kirurg foretog ny vurdering af den nødvendige behandling ud fra CT-skanningen. De to vurderinger blev foretaget blindet.

Resultater: Artiklen viste, at CT-skanning ændrede andelen af de enkelte diagnoser. Således ændredes andelen af SH-III epifisiolyser fra 48,4% til 31,3%, andelen af SH-IV epifisiolyser fra 12,5% til 18,7% og andelen af triplanfrakturer fra 25,0% til 35,9%. Andelen af Tillaux-frakturer var uændret. Samtidig fandt man, at andelen af patienter, der skal skulle tilbydes operation steg fra 28,1% til 66,6%. Dette skyldtes mere end 2 mm frakturdiastase, inkongruens i ledflade eller løst intra-artikulært fragment alle visualiserede ved CT-skanning.

Ekspertkommentar

Af artiklen fremgår, at andelen af patienter, hvor der er indikation for reposition og osteosyntese mere end fordobles, når disse frakturer CT skannes. I studiet har man imidlertid kun foretaget røntgenoptagelser i 2 planer (anteroposteriort og lateralt). I DK foretages rutinemæssigt også en skråoptagelse, der vil utvivlsom vil give flere oplysninger om frakturforløb, størrelsen af diastase, inkongruens i ledflade m.m. Resultaterne fra studiet kan således ikke overføres helt til danske forhold. I børnesektoren på Odense Universitetshospital anbefaler vi dog, at der foretages CT-

skanning ved mistanke om intra-artikulære frakturer i distale tibia og altid ved triplan- og Tillaux-frakturer. Uover en mere korrekt diagnose giver CT-skanning vigtige supplerende oplysninger ved planlægning af operation (korrekt skrueplaceringen m.m.)

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