

A Rare Case of Neglected Elbow Dislocation with Functional Range of Motion

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Abstract

Case Report

Neglected elbow dislocation is common in our context, it leads to joint stiffness and a deterioration in quality of life making daily activity difficult. We report a case of 76 year-old lady with a neglected posterolateral elbow dislocation occurred 20 years ago. Initially the elbow was treated by traditional treatment. The physical examination found a functional range of motion and therapeutic abstention was decided given the minimalist loss of function.

Keywords: Neglected, elbow dislocation, abstention.

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INTRODUCTION

Neglected elbow dislocations are uncommon in industrialized countries. In our context, however, they are not uncommon. The prognosis is marked by stiffness even after surgery. The authors report a case of a neglected elbow dislocation with good preservation of elbow function.

CASE REPORT

We report a case of 76-year-old lady right handed, with a history of elbow trauma 20 years ago following a domestic fall, traditionally treated, who

consulted for chronic left elbow pain with slight axial deviation.

The physical examination found a minor deviation on varus of the left elbow, flexion-extension 0°/20°/95° and pronosupination 30°/40 (Figure 1) with no signs of neurovascular injuries. Anteroposterior and lateral x-rays of the elbow were done showing a posterolateral dislocation of the elbow (Figure 2).

The therapeutic decision, after long discussion with patient about benefits and disadvantages of surgery, was not to operate.



Figure 1: Clinical image showing functional range of motion



Figure 2: Anteroposterior and lateral view showing elbow dislocation

DISCUSSION

We took a look at literature we found that the management is so variable and the bloody reduction remains the most frequent but nonsystematic indication. Some authors [1-3] definitively abstain in the face of stiffness which may improve after a few weeks of rehabilitation suggesting adaptation of the dislocated elbow over time [4]. Others authors like Dishino [5] who reported a case series of 81 cases operated with a follow up of between 4 months and seven years, the author performed distal humerus resection on 40 patients and repositioning on 40 other patients, range of motion were similar for both techniques and resection of distal humerus appears to be superior for pronosupination but exposes to the risks of laxity and instability.

In view of that we suggest that neglected elbow dislocation with functional range of motion can be managed with therapeutic abstention

CONCLUSION

Neglected elbow dislocation is a condition that is still common in our context due to difficult access to care and lack of patient education, significantly

compromising upper limb function, although it is easy to manage if diagnosed early.

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