Uncommon type of wound: Morel-Lavallée lesion

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DESCRIPTION
A 26-year-old goalkeeper presented with pain and swelling of the left trochanteric region 2 weeks after he fell over it. On physical examination, he had a large round-shaped swelling over the left trochanter majus. There were no signs of infection or open wound and the patient was otherwise normal. An ultrasound scan (US) revealed a sharply defined elongated fluid collection/haematoma overlying the left trochanter majus between the subcutaneous adipose tissue and the underlying fascia, measuring approximately 7×0.7×5 cm in diameter suggestive of a Morel-Lavallée lesion (MLL) (figure 1A,B). The lesion demonstrated no flow on colour Doppler and no other pathological findings regarding the deeper musculature were noted.

MLL was first described by the French surgeon Victor-Auguste-François Morel-Lavallée in 1863. It is a relatively rare condition that usually develops following traumatic injury. This is a closed degloving injury that occurs as a result of pressure and shear stress between the subcutaneous tissue and the superficial fascia which are separated from each other while disrupting the surrounding vasculature and lymphatic vessels and resulting in a pseudocyst-like fluid collection of blood and/or fat and debris. Depending on the tissue composition, the lesion may also be described as a seroma, haematoma or fat necrosis. Given this pathogenesis, it is not surprising that the most common site of occurrence is over the greater trochanter as was in our case. The majority of cases most probably go undetected unless they cause a significant swelling and/or pain.

The lesion itself has no severe implications and can be easily treated unless the diagnosis and treatment are delayed. In this regard, US is an efficient tool in the early and accurate diagnosis of suspicious closed wounds. Morel-Lavallée lesion is a closed degloving injury that occurs as a result of pressure and shear stress between the subcutaneous tissue and the superficial fascia.

US is also efficient in the treatment of Morel-Lavallée lesion as it provides guidance for efficient aspiration of the fluid.

Learning points
► Ultrasound scan (US) is an efficient tool in the early and accurate diagnosis of suspicious closed wounds.
► Morel-Lavallée lesion is a closed degloving injury that occurs as a result of pressure and shear stress between the subcutaneous tissue and the superficial fascia.
► US is also efficient in the treatment of Morel-Lavallée lesion as it provides guidance for efficient aspiration of the fluid.
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