Very unusual great toe injury in a motorcyclist: simultaneous ipsilateral hallucial metatarsophalangeal and interphalangeal joint dislocations

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DESCRIPTION

Simultaneous dislocations of interphalangeal and metatarsophalangeal joints of the first ray are rare in the upper limb. Concurrent interphalangeal and metatarsophalangeal dislocations in the lower limb are less common. The lesser toes have traumatic interphalangeal dislocations more commonly. Metatarsophalangeal dislocations are most common in the great toe, but a rare injury overall. The authors believe that this is the only reported case of simultaneous interphalangeal and metatarsophalangeal joint dislocation of the great toe.

The man, in question, a man in his 30s, attended the emergency department after a motorcycle versus stationary object road traffic incident. He had significant hip pain and was found to have a pelvic ring and acetabulum fracture on CT. Secondary survey revealed a great toe deformity, which was subsequently X-rayed. The X-ray showed simultaneous dorsolateral metatarsophalangeal dislocation and dorsomedial interphalangeal dislocation (figure 1). This was reduced expediently under conscious sedation. At 6 months, the patient presented with mild interphalangeal joint pain and his X-ray showed post-traumatic arthritis of both joints, radiologically worse in the metatarsophalangeal joint (figure 2).

He was treated with footwear advice and was counselled on the risks and benefits of arthrodesis, but declined the same. He is currently attending a musculoskeletal radiologist for intra-articular steroid and local anaesthetic injections.

Learning points

- The importance of secondary survey. This man had a severe distracting injury which was identified immediately. Thanks to a thorough secondary survey, this injury was identified and treated expeditiously.
- The significant burden of post-traumatic sequelae. This man developed post-traumatic arthritis of both his interphalangeal and metatarsophalangeal joints. Although trauma is a fast-paced specialty, long-term outcomes can be significant for patients.
- The X-rays don’t tell you everything, the patient does. This man had post-traumatic arthritis of both joints. This was radiologically worse on the metatarsophalangeal joint. He distinctly described worse pain at the interphalangeal joint, highlighting the importance of an adequate and detailed history.

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Case reports provide a valuable learning resource for the scientific community and can indicate areas of interest for future research. They should not be used in isolation to guide treatment choices or public health policy.
REFERENCES


