

X-Ray

This is a case of a 64-year-old woman seen at Tel HaShomer Sheba medical center. She fell on an outstretched arm and had a "dinner fork" abnormality (grossly swollen wrist with a deformity).

What does the x-ray show?



Answer:

The x-ray does show a fracture of the tip of radius. But the orthopedist and the emergency physician both initially missed a second fracture - a spiral one of the metacarpal that appears at the top of the x-ray. This is a common problem - we look for the fracture we expect to find and often miss a second fracture. That is why the May issue of Radiology made a startling recommendation - look at the x-ray before you know anything about the patient, then examine the patient and then re look at the x-ray!

This is also a reminder that many fractures come in pairs. Of course in this category is Colle's fracture with radial and tip of the ulna styloid fractures - but perhaps the trickiest is Maisonneuve's fracture - where there is a fracture of the proximal fibula and medial malleolus - easy to miss if you aren't careful.

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Ed Note: I recently was involved in treating the victims of a terrorist attack. Despite working in Israel as an EP for six years, this was my first time in dealing with such an event. I recorded my impressions in the following piece, but I must add that since then I have dealt with many more and the feelings have not changed. In addition I have included two poems by an eighteen year old American on this situation we are suffering from. He requested they be printed anonymously

Only about four hours have past since "heroes" earned eternal favor by blowing more innocent people apart in Emmanuel. Only this time I was in the emergency department to treat the survivors. An eleven year old girl was in a coma she will probably never come out of. She was receiving her first chest tube. A mother of small children was on a respirator, with a hole the size of a penny in her chest. OK- we've read all the gore in the newspaper, but this time I saw it with my own eyes. I live here. I've seen the suffering. I know the truth. I tried to deal with it. But when I came home and saw my own wife- a mother of small children and my own daughter of 11; who doesn't even know what a chest tube is, I lost it. I cried and cried until there was nothing left. Not only in my eyes, but in my soul. My brothers: We taught the world morality, we will teach them hope as well.

9978

What power do we have in a world where we are the rulers?

So life is with fear.

Every moment the muscles are flexed

And the brow is wrinkled

Life won't go on

Alertness is what keeps it alive

And tension is its profit

And moments its reward.

Is it lead or the leaders?

Is it the mine or the mind?

When one is threatened

One examines each aspect of existence to the fullest

One learns that dying young is the price for believing

81878

When comfortable

You don't notice these things

When aroused-

The desert has become his keeper

And the hills his ally.

David's harp has become a slingshot

Harmless and ominous

His strength is a shadow- and it lies not in his hand

But in his heart.

He has been told that comfort is just the absence of tension

And when the next test comes-

He has fled into walls and come out bloody.

He has learned that all men would like to see his death.

The previous generation has died, remembering the fleshpots of Germany

Leaving us to try our luck at continuing

The jesters laugh, hiding warheads beneath their costumes

They laugh and forget