

Atraumatic iliopsoas tendon tears: a rare cause of hip pain in the elderly

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Although neck of femur fractures are the most common finding in elderly patients presenting with hip pain and inability to bear weight, rare and unexpected differentials are sometimes found (Blankenbaker and Tuite, 2008). An 89-year-old woman presented with a 3-day history of right groin pain and difficulty weight-bearing, with no history of preceding trauma. The pain was severe, sharp shooting in nature and radiating down the inner aspect of her thigh. Plain radiograph of her pelvis ruled out a neck of femur fracture. Magnetic resonance imaging demonstrated an acute avulsion of the right iliopsoas tendon with associated haematoma (Figure 1). She was treated conservatively with physiotherapy and analgesia with uneventful recovery.

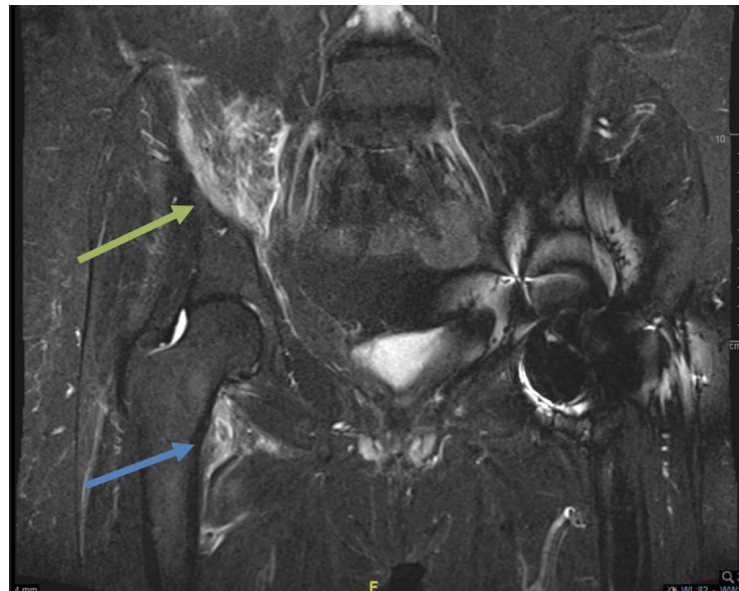


Figure 1. Coronal T2-weighted image of the right hip which showed no bony abnormality in the right hip with no bony oedema or any evidence of occult fracture. However, it showed acute avulsion of the iliopsoas tendon off its insertion on the lesser trochanter (blue arrow). The muscle had retracted proximally ~4.5 cm with an associated haematoma (yellow arrow).

Spontaneous atraumatic tears are extremely rare, with only a handful of cases reported in the literature. Magnetic resonance imaging is the investigation of choice and management with conservative measures has favourable outcomes (Lecouvet et al, 2005; Polster et al, 2008).

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