

A rare cause of radiculopathy: facet joint synovial cyst protruding into the spinal canal

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A 53-year-old man was referred to the authors' radiology service for magnetic resonance imaging with complaints of severe back and leg pain and weakness in the lower extremities. Magnetic resonance imaging showing a cystic mass (asterix) in the spinal canal at the level of the L4 vertebra (**Figures 1a–c**). The sagittal and axial T2-weighted images (**Figures 1a and b**) showed that the mass was attached to the left facet joint space (arrow) and compressed the caudal fibres (dashed arrow). The mass was enhanced peripherally on the contrast-enhanced fat-suppressed T1-weighted image (**Figure 1c**). Facet joint synovial cysts are uncommon, and can cause radiculopathy, back pain and spinal canal stenosis (Venkatanarasimha and Suresh, 2009).

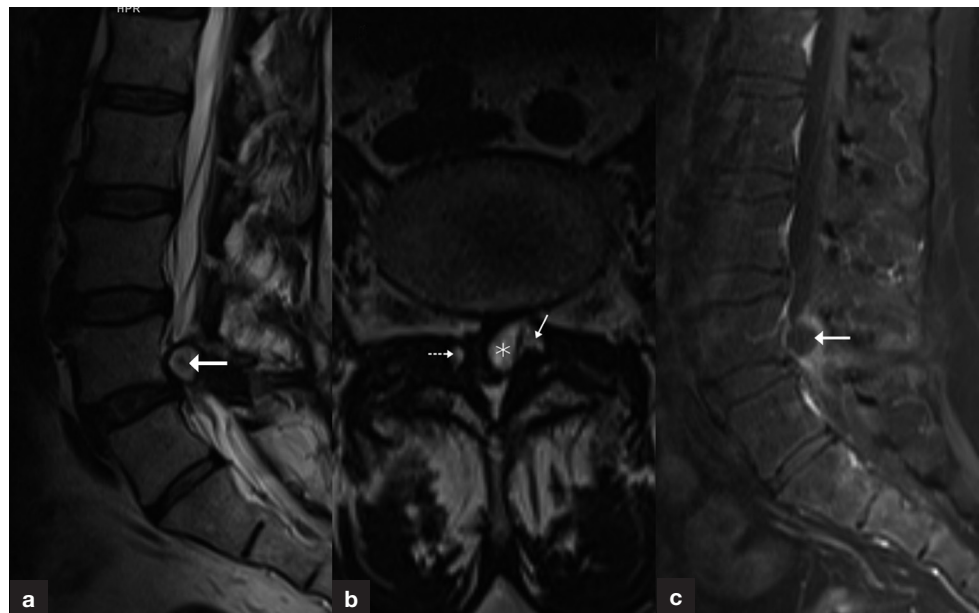


Figure 1. a. Hyperintense cyst extending into the spinal canal on sagittal T2-weighted magnetic resonance image (arrow). b. Axial T2-weighted image showing that the cyst was attached to the left facet joint space (arrow) and compressed the caudal fibres (dashed arrow). c. Hypointense cyst (arrow) enhanced peripherally on the contrast-enhanced fat-suppressed sagittal T1-weighted image.

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Reference

Venkatanarasimha N, Suresh SP. AJR teaching file: an uncommon cause of spinal canal stenosis. *AJR Am J Roentgenol.* 2009;193(3):56–58. <https://doi.org/10.2214/AJR.07.7110>

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