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IMAGES IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Open dislocation of the elbow with ipsilateral fracture of the radial head and distal radius: a rare combination without vascular injury

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Open elbow dislocation is a rare injury often associated with neurovascular damage. Common fractures associated with elbow dislocation are of the medial epicondyle, lateral epicondyle, radial head and coronoid process. There is only one reported case in the literature of an elbow dislocation with fracture of the radial head and the distal radius.¹

We present an unusual case of an open posterolateral elbow dislocation associated with radial head and distal radial fracture. There was no neurovascular injury.

The most probable mechanism to produce this type of injury would be a fall on the outstretched hand. In this case the rebound forces from the ground were dorsal to the radius as the fracture was dorsally angulated. This force then

causes the radial head fracture due to the longitudinal impaction of the radius against the capitellum. This dorsal force would hyperextend the elbow causing the dislocation. This report increases the awareness of the presence of a double injury to the forearm.

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Figure 1 Radiographs showing posterolateral dislocation of the elbow with fractures of the radial head and distal radius.

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