CORRESPONDENCE

Diagnostic Imaging Modalities in Head and Neck Disease

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bei+akuter+Sinusitis+%28weit+gehend%29+wirkungslos%29.
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Critical Comments Necessary

I think the above mentioned article requires some critical comments:

- The antibiotic treatment of sinusitis is highly controversial—especially in the light of the current discussion about the rise of resistances and the issues with uncontrolled use of antibiotics—and is not backed by any evidence (1). Why it is important to treat the patient with antibiotics before the CT study is performed to “eliminate any acute inflammatory component that may be present” is a mystery to me.
- Today, radiography of the nose is as outdated as are the other conventional x-rays. With it, we will not reveal anything which could not be detected by palpation after the swelling of the external nose has subsided. In suspected extended fracture of the nasoethmoid complex, a CT scan is always indicated.
- Nota bene: The term “fracture of the nasal bone” should not be used any longer and left to the medical literature of the past. The diagnosis of an isolated fracture of the nasal bone (os nasale) can never be based on an x-ray of the nose. Since the nose consists of five bones, the term nasal fracture should be used.
- Certainly, the value of ultrasonography of the paranasal sinuses for diagnosing sinusitis, especially acute sinusitis and paranasal sinus mucocoeles, is significantly underestimated in this article. The diagnostic value of ultrasonography of the paranasal sinuses is above all linked to the individual practical experience. In our practice, ultrasonography has become an indispensable part of daily paranasal sinus diagnostics and its everyday use has certainly helped to avoid thousands of unnecessary x-rays.

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In Reply:

Surgical treatment of sinusitis is only indicated in chronic inflammatory conditions not responding to conservative treatment (1, 2). The aim of conservative treatment, where necessary including the use of antibiotics prior to a pre-operative CT scan, is to ensure that the CT study only shows the extent of the chronic changes to be treated surgically.

The value of projection radiography of the nose in trauma patients is indeed discussed controversially—an example of a traditional method with no validation today where low-dose CT imaging is widely available and a reassessment of the risk-benefit balance of diagnostic methods should be performed. Therefore, we in principal agree with the line of reasoning expressed in the letter. However, we have unfortunately not found any studies on this and the current guidelines do not address this issue in detail.

Thank you for clarifying the commonly used, but imprecise term “fracture of the nasal bone”! With regard to the limited value of ultrasonography, please refer to the cited literature.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors of all contributions declare that no conflict of interest exists.