Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

We agree that there are limitations with this retrospective method of data collection, which utilised a serendipitous series of axial CT imaging taken contemporaneously with plain films. The nature of the polytraumatised patients requiring further imaging of the thorax beyond plain radiographs dictated that the majority of these would have been nursed supine initially, at the time when both radiographs and CT were taken. We concede such a retrospective study design did not allow for rigorous standardisation of the positioning of the patients.

There have been variations of described techniques in the measurement of shortening of the clavicle.^{1,2} We agree that differences may be seen between the two imaging modalities as described in the literature referenced in the correspondent's letter. In this series however, no significant difference was demonstrated in the measurement of shortening between the two methods.

Where measurement of displacement is concerned, the aim was comparison of the measurement in the coronal plane (the AP radiograph) and the axial plane (the CT slice). This required measurement of the displacement over several CT slices, which can be performed using PACS software as described in the text of the article. As this is not clearly illustrated by a single image, the 3D reconstructions were used for the figures as an indication of where measurements were made, for better clarity in a print article.

It appears that we are both in agreement regarding the outcome of the article, however we do concur that such a study needs to be taken in the context of the design limitations. We welcome ongoing prospective work into the ideal imaging modality or technique to best aid decision making in the treatment of this often contentious fracture.

References

1. Smekal V, Deml C, Irenberger A, et al. Length determination in midshaft clavicle fractures: validation of measurement. *J Orthop Trauma*. 2008;22(7):458–462.
2. Silva SR, Fox J, Speers M, et al. Reliability of measurements of clavicle shaft fracture shortening in adolescents. *J Pediatr Orthop*. 2013;33(3):e19–e22.

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