

Calcific Discitis

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History

Child with persistent neck pain 1 week after minor injury.

Diagnosis

Calcific Discitis

Discussion

Idiopathic disc calcification is distinct from hyperparathyroidism, hemochromatosis, ochronosis, chondrocalcinosis, alkaptonuria, and hypervitaminosis.

Calcific discitis has an abrupt onset. Preceding trauma is seen in 30%, fever in 23%, and upper respiratory tract infection in 15%. Calcific discitis involves the nucleus pulposus, not the annulus fibrosus or ring apophysis. Clinical resolution is rapid but imaging resolution is slow, taking months or even years to normalize.

Disc calcification is most common in the thoracic spine. Thoracic disc calcifications tend to be more symptomatic (e.g., pain, decreased range of motion) than cervical disc calcifications. Cervical calcifications tend to occur at a single level whereas thoracic calcification are more often multilevel.

Findings

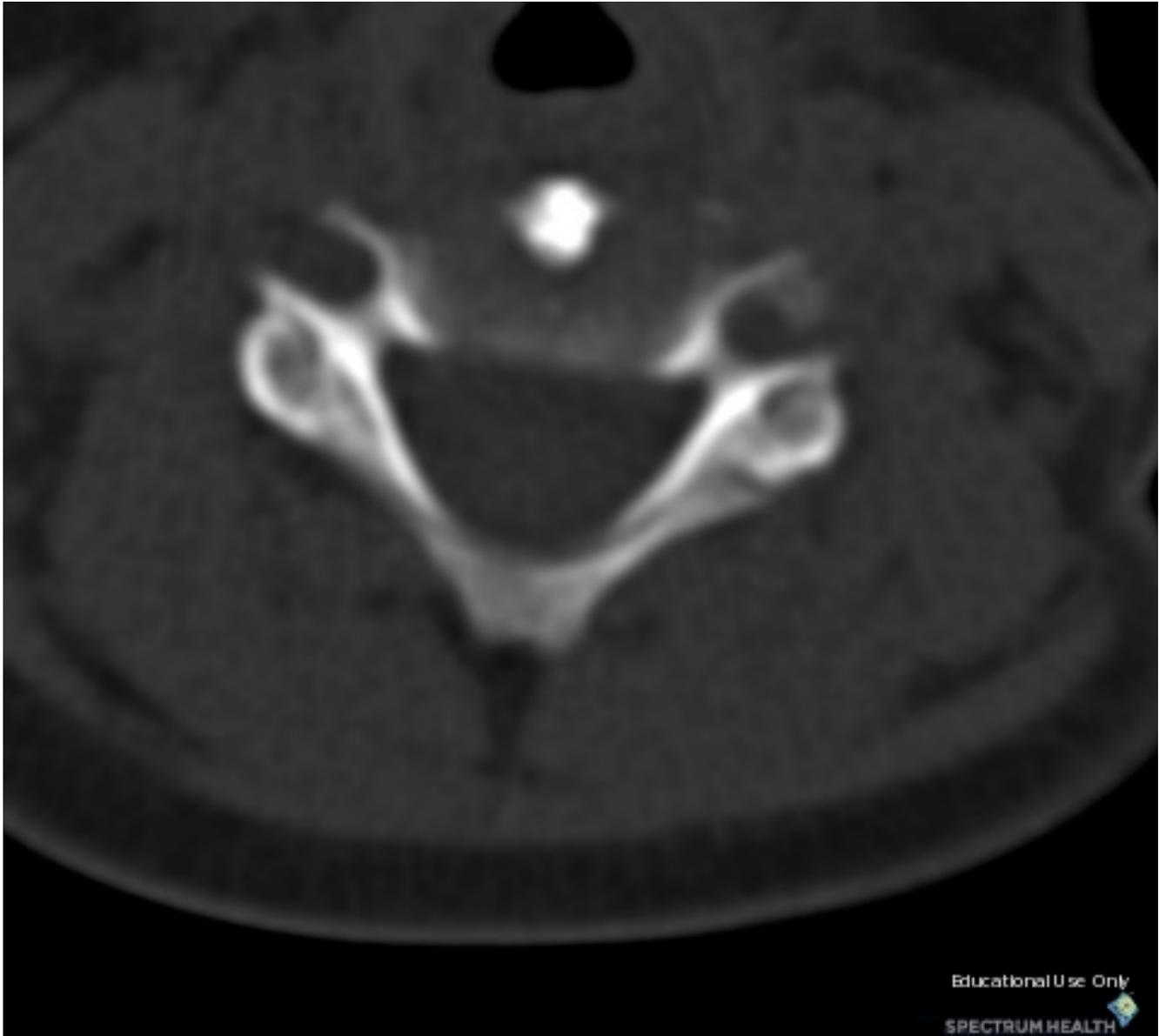
CT- Calcified anterior disc protrusion at C4-C5.

MR- Widened anterior disc with abnormal signal; posterior disc is normal.

Reference

Dai LY, Ye H, Qian QR. The natural history of cervical disc calcification in children. JBJS (2004); 86:1467-1472.







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