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Letter to the Editor

Ultrasound Examination for a Traumatic Thumb Injury: Simple and Straightforward

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A 29-year-old man (psychiatry resident) was seen for acute right-hand pain on the thenar side. He described the pain to have ensued after a fall episode 3 days ago (during walking). He declared that the pain was worse upon palpation and during hand movements. He denied any neurological symptoms and the rest of his medical history was noncontributory.

Physical examination revealed erythema and swelling on the right thenar area (Figure 1). Palpation and range of motion were painful (without any limitation) in the same area. Neurological examination was unremarkable. Ultrasound (US) examination was consistent with isolated early strain in the abductor pollicis brevis muscle (Figure 1). As the patient had not received any former treatment, he was prescribed cold application and rest. Repeat US examination on the third week was almost completely normal.

Muscle strain is a common pattern of injury (generally tractional) and refers to an abnormal stretch of muscle(s). For sure, it can be caused by accident or over/misuse of the muscle. Owing to its several advantages (e.g., convenience, portability, and cost-effectiveness), the US plays an important role in the static

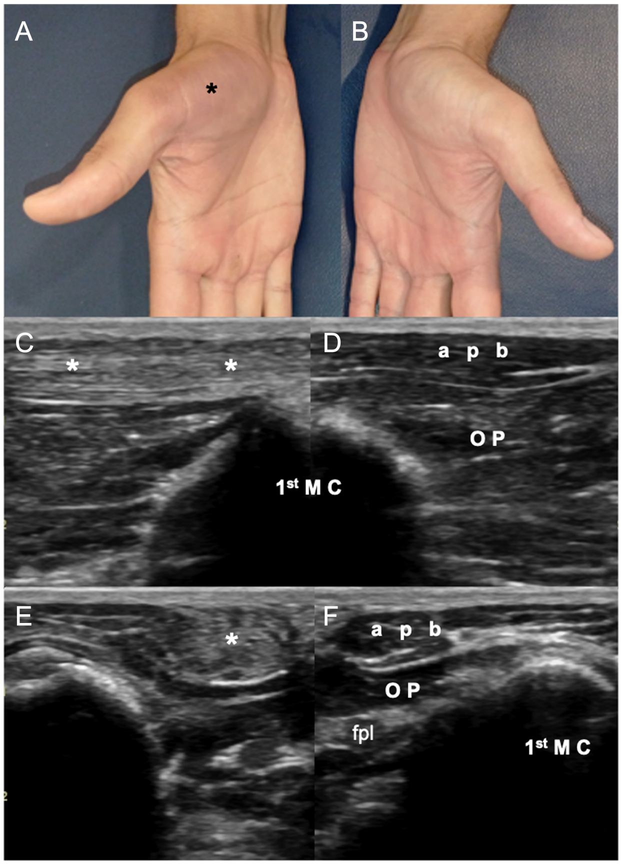

Figure 1. Photographs show the discoloration (asterisk) on the right thenar region (A) vs. the asymptomatic side (B). Comparative ultrasound examination in the long- (C, D) and short-axis (E, F) views shows the hyperechoic (asterisks) abductor pollicis brevis muscle, which is consistent with an early strain lesion. First MC, first metacarpal bone; fpl, flexor pollicis longus tendon; OP, opponens pollicis muscle.

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and dynamic evaluation of relevant lesions in musculoskeletal practice.[1] Yet, early/accurate detection of the lesion or assessment of its severity during close/easy follow-up is paramount for prompt management of daily working conditions.[2] To this end, the purpose of this report was 2-fold. First, we aimed to showcase an (otherwise trivial) isolated strain lesion of the abductor pollicis brevis muscle. Second, we imply that basic knowledge/awareness as regards the use of the US in every site/day clinical practice can significantly aid in the management of pertinent cases, i.e., in terms of saving cost and decreasing sick leave as well as waiting period and exposure to radiation.[3]

Informed Consent: Verbal informed consent was obtained from the patient who agreed to take part in the study.

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