

Incidental detection of multiple osteochondromas on computed tomography in a patient with systemic lupus erythematosus

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Abstract

Osteochondromas are the most common benign bone tumors and are usually discovered during childhood or adolescence. Multiple osteochondromas are typically associated with hereditary multiple exostoses. Incidental detection in asymptomatic patients remains uncommon. We report the case of a young woman followed for systemic lupus erythematosus, in whom multiple osteochondromas were incidentally identified on thoraco-abdomino-pelvic computed tomography performed for disease assessment, emphasizing the key role of imaging in the diagnosis of benign bone lesions.

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Case presentation

A 19-year-old woman with a known history of systemic lupus erythematosus was admitted for an inflammatory articular flare. As part of the evaluation of disease activity, a Computed Tomography (CT) scan was performed. The patient had no bone pain, skeletal deformities, or functional impairment. There was no reported family history of similar bone lesions.

Description

CT examination revealed, incidentally, multiple osseous excrescences arising from both the axial and appendicular skeleton. The lesions involved the ribs, spine, pelvis, and long bones of the limbs. They demonstrated a typical continuity of the cortical and medullary bone with the parent bone, an imaging feature characteristic of osteochondromas (Figure 1).

Osteochondromas are benign bone tumors that may present as solitary or multiple lesions, the latter most often associated with hereditary multiple exostoses. Computed tomography allows precise characterization of lesion morphology, distribution, and detection of potential complications. In the absence of clinical symptoms or imaging signs of complications such as neurovascular compression, fracture, or malignant transformation, no specific treatment was required, and clinical-radiological follow-up was recommended. The association with systemic lupus erythematosus was considered incidental (Figure 2).

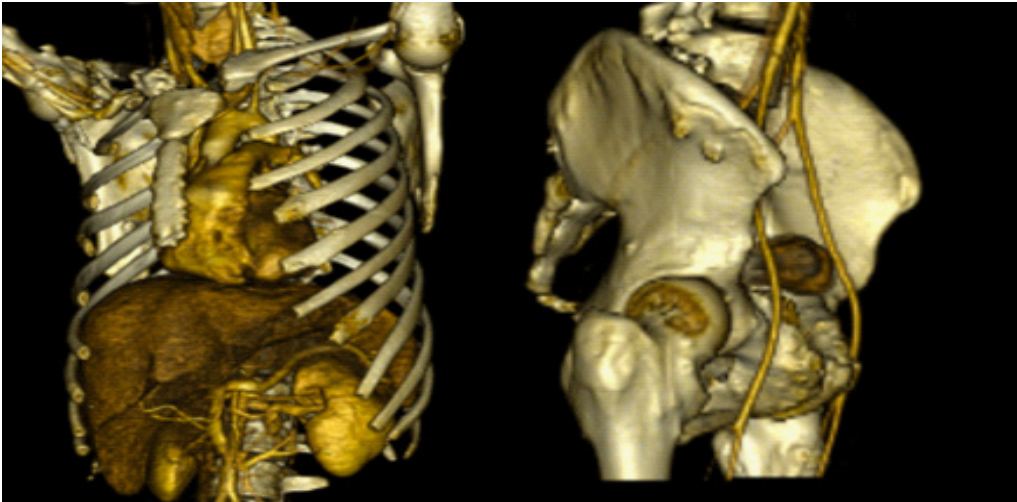


Figure 1: Three-dimensional CT reconstruction showing multiple osseous outgrowths involving the axial and appendicular skeleton.

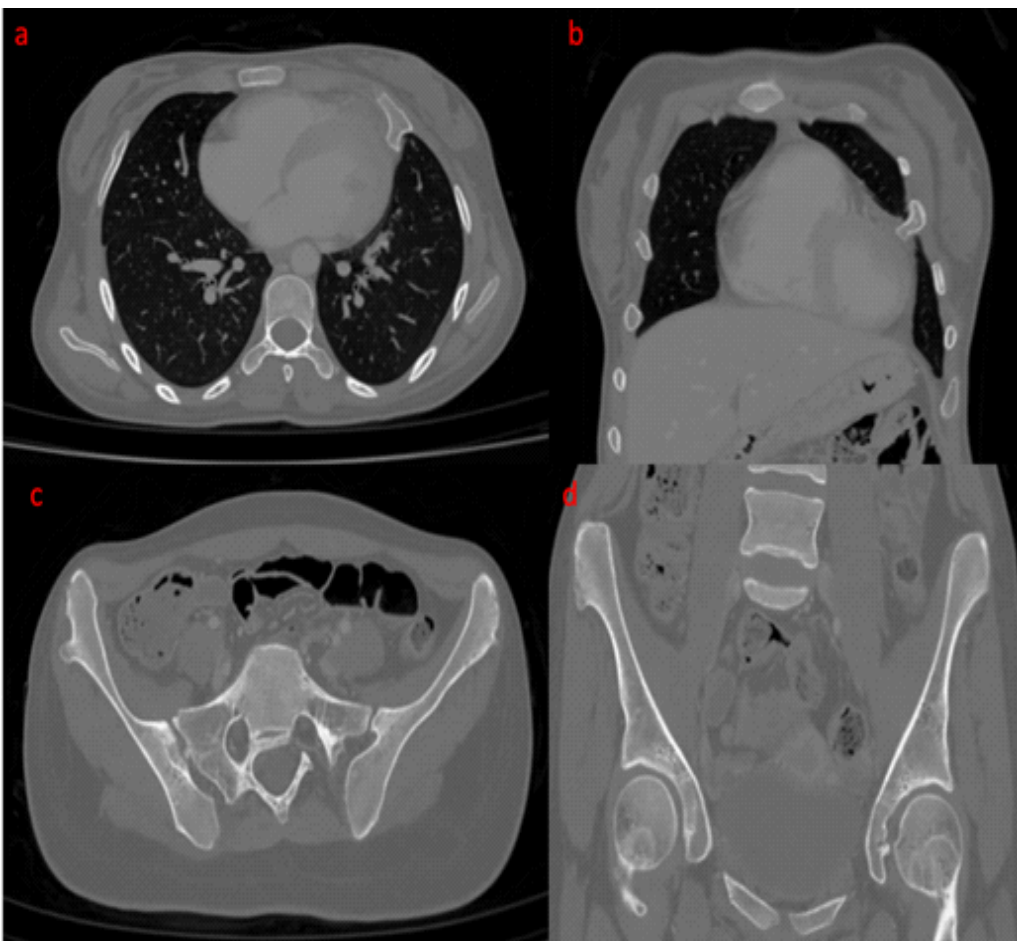


Figure 2: Axial (a,c) and coronal (b,d) CT images demonstrating multiple broad-based osseous excrescences with cortico-medullary continuity with the underlying bone, consistent with multiple osteochondromas.