

IMAGES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE

Post-Traumatic Herniated Cervical Disk



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A HEALTHY 18-YEAR-OLD MAN HAD SUDDEN TRANSIENT TETRAPLEGIA after heading a soccer ball. Ten minutes later, he had recovered normal strength. On examination at that time, he had intense cervical pain, paresthesias on his shoulders and arms, and no other neurologic deficits. A sagittal T₂-weighted magnetic resonance imaging scan obtained at hospital admission (Panel A) showed bulging C3–C4 disk herniation, with severe spinal cord compression (arrow) and spinal cord edema. T₂-weighted sequences did not suggest spinal cord hemorrhage. The C3–C4 disk was almost collapsed. The patient was admitted for urgent surgery. He underwent discectomy, insertion of an intersomatic polyetheretherketone (PEEK) cage, and placement of a cervical plate (Panel B). He recovered full sensation in his arms and legs and had no neurologic deficits after the surgery. He was able to play soccer 6 months postoperatively.

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