EMERGENCY CASEBOOKS

An unusual case of patella dislocation

S Awan, A Parfitt, P Selvakumar, P Reid

A 9 year old boy presented to the accident and emergency department with a painful, tender swollen right knee. He had fallen 4 feet from a wall and struck his knee on the edge of a kerb. On examination the knee was held in a 45 degrees of fixed flexion. A 10 cm horizontal laceration extending to deep fascia was evident. Radiography (see fig 1) revealed the patella to be standing horizontally in the knee joint itself.

He was taken to theatre and the wound cleansed and explored. A medial arthrotomy was performed which showed the quadriceps tendon peeled off the upper half of the patella. Knee ligaments were intact. Reduction was easily achieved wound closure effected and the limb immobilised in a cast. The child made a full functional recovery.

Intra-articular dislocation of the patella is extremely rare.¹ Most commonly a sporting injury in young males, it should be manipulated under general anaesthetic. An attempt may then be made at closed reduction (with knee flexion to 90 degrees and pressure from below on the patella), though usually open reduction is required.² The extensor mechanism in these injuries is usually intact and the taut quadriceps pulls the patella into the intercondylar notch.

- 1 Dimentberg RA. Intra-articular dislocation of the patella. *Clin J Sport Med* 1997;7:126-8.
- 2 Nsouli AZ, Nahabedian M. Intra-articular dislocation of the patella. *J Trauma* 1988;28:256-8.

Figure 1 Radiograph of the knee.

**Accident and
Emergency
Department, Lister
Hospital, Stevenage
SG1 4AB**

S Awan
A Parfitt
P Selvakumar
P Reid

Correspondence to:
Dr Parfitt.

Massive hiatal hernia

A Villa, G Ceriani, M Negrini, D Ubezio

An 86 year old woman presented with clinical symptoms of intestinal obstruction. The patient had a previous history of diverticular disease. Examination of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems was unremarkable with the exception of reduced breath sounds at the lung bases. On examination of the abdomen, there was distension and tenderness in the left lower quadrant. Bowel sounds were absent.

Chest radiography performed in the emergency room demonstrated enlargement of the

transverse diameter of the cardiomedastinal image. The cardiac shadow was surrounded by a radiolucent area, although a clear horizontal line at present to the right and to the left, suggesting an air/fluid level (fig 1). An echocardiogram excluded the presence of cardiac tamponade.

A nasogastric tube was placed and aspiration of 50 ml of fluid and air resulted in resolution of the radiograph appearances (fig 2). At laparotomy, intestinal obstruction and peritonitis were confirmed. There was a large hiatus hernia.

**Emergency
Department,
Fatebenefratelli
Hospital, C.so P.ta
Nuova 23, 20121 Milan,
Italy**

A Villa
G Ceriani
M Negrini
D Ubezio

Correspondence to:
Dr Villa.