Irreducible Dislocation of the Interphalangeal Joint of the Thumb Due to Sesamoid Bone Interposition: A Case Report

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Dislocation of the interphalangeal (IP) joint of the thumb is rare. The inherent stability of the IP joint of the thumb prevents dislocation in common patterns of hand injury. Only very few cases of irreducible dislocation have been reported at this joint.¹-³ We report a case of compound irreducible dislocation due to sesamoid bone interposition.

Case Report

A 32-year-old man came to us with deformity of his right thumb following a fall from his motorbike two days earlier. He had an open anterior wound at the IP joint crease that partially exposed the condyle of the proximal phalanx (Fig. 1). The condyle showed signs of abrasion injury. The wound also had seropurulent discharge, indicating infection. X-ray film showed dorsal dislocation of the IP joint of the thumb with a small speck of bone in the intervening space, the contour of which was suggestive of sesamoid bone (Fig. 2). Reduction by traction had been attempted by a native bone setter soon after the fall and subsequently by two doctors at different hospitals. All efforts were unsuccessful.

The wound was debrided under anesthesia, using an axillary block, and irreducibility was confirmed.

The flexor pollicis longus tendon was found to be split longitudinally, with the major portion subluxed to the radial side of the condyle of the proximal phalanx. The palmar plate had been disrupted near its proximal attachment and was found interposed.

Figure 1. Clinical picture of the dislocated interphalangeal joint of the thumb with an anterior wound.