



Figure. (A) Photograph of the patient, showing swelling of right lower abdomen and deformation of the navel to the left. (B) Axial T2-weighted MRI of the T12-L1 intervertebral disk, showing right paramedian disk herniation. (C) Sagittal T2-weighted MRI showing a disk fragment sequestered behind the body of L1.

Painful swelling of the abdomen

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An 80-year-old man presented with intractable pain and swelling of the right lower abdomen, immediately above the groin. Complaints were present for 1 month and, during the last week, involved the groin and upper thigh. Pain increased in the sitting position, and its intensity prevented the patient from sleeping at night. On examination, the right lower abdominal wall protruded due to paralysis of the musculature; the navel was deformed due to it being pulled to the left (figure, A). Sensory testing revealed allodynia of the dermatomes T12 and L1, with gentle touching of

the skin causing severe pain.¹ Abdominal echography was unremarkable, but MRI of the thoracolumbar spine demonstrated right paramedian disk herniation at the level T12-L1 (see figure, B), with a disk fragment sequestered behind the body of L1 (see figure, C). This free fragment of disk material compressed the right T12 and L1 nerve roots, causing the painful thoracolumbar radiculopathy in this patient.²

Acknowledgment

The authors thank P.A.M. Rosekrans, MD for providing the photograph of the patient and L.C.W. de Jonge, MD for MRIs B and C.

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Neurology[®]

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Neurology 2003;61;138

DOI 10.1212/01.WNL.0000065883.97221.30

This information is current as of July 8, 2003

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