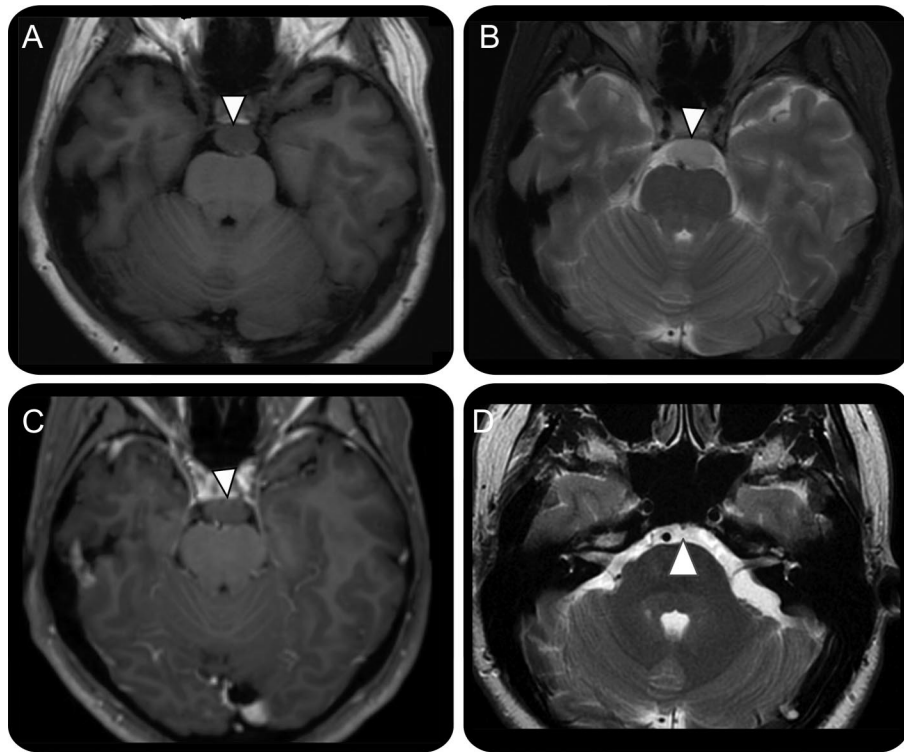


Teaching NeuroImages: Incidental retroclival mass in a patient with headache

Shane Wells, MD
Ashok Srinivasan, MD

Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. Ashok Srinivasan, Division of Neuroradiology, Department of Radiology, University of Michigan Health System, 1500 E Medical center drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48109
ashoks@med.umich.edu

Figure MRI



On a 3T magnet, an ovoid, circumscribed, retroclival mass is seen, which demonstrates intermediate T1-weighted (A), mildly hyperintense T2-weighted (B) signal with no contrast enhancement (C). On the axial T2-weighted sequence, there is an osseous stalk arising from the dorsal aspect of the clivus and extending into the mass, confirming the diagnosis of echordosis physaliphora (D).

A 46-year-old woman presented with chronic headaches and facial numbness. Her clinical examination was unremarkable. MRI demonstrated a nonenhancing retroclival mass with intermediate T1-weighted and hyperintense T2-weighted signal (figure, A–C). While chordoma, chondrosarcoma, dermoid, and metastasis were possibilities, demonstration of an osseous stalk (figure, D) confirmed the diagnosis of echordosis physaliphora (EP).

Recognition of EP, a benign notochordal remnant, on imaging can avoid unnecessary biopsy. Presence of an osseous stalk is considered pathognomonic

and can be seen on both MRI and CT.^{1,2} While usually asymptomatic, it can present with headache, visual disturbances, gait imbalance, and paresthesias.^{1,2}

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From the Department of Radiology, University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor.

Disclosure: The authors report no disclosures.

Neurology[®]

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Neurology 2010;75;e93

DOI 10.1212/WNL.0b013e318200d7cc

This information is current as of December 6, 2010

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