CASE REPORT

COLLES FRACTURE DUE TO WEIGHTLIFTING

P. H. ROWE, MA, MB, BChir

Senior House Officer Orthopaedics, Brook General Hospital, Shooter’s Hill, London, S.E. 18

Present Address:
Senior House Officer General Surgery, St. Helier Hospital, Carshalton

ABSTRACT

The case report of a weightlifter who sustained a Colles fracture is described. Wrist injuries sustained in weightlifting are reviewed. They highlight the need for proper instruction and supervision in this sport.

A 21 year old porter, 73 kilograms in weight, had been weightlifting for 18 months under supervision. He presented in casualty with a painful wrist after lifting 79 kilograms (without supervision) at his club and then having lost control of the weight, stumbled backwards with sudden hyperextension of the wrists and landed on his elbow. A radiograph showed a comminuted fracture of the distal end of the radius, with dorsilateral angulation of the distal fragment and a fracture of the ulnar styloid process. The fracture was treated by closed reduction and immobilisation, healing was uneventful.

DISCUSSION

The object in weightlifting is to lift a heavy weight employing the strongest muscle groups at the point of greatest mechanical advantage, in a subtly efficient summation of forces. Injuries seen in weightlifters mainly involve the knee and back — the knee being particularly vulnerable at the beginning of the lift.

Wrist injuries are less well described. Reilly (1978) states that “deterioration may occur at the wrist” due to hypertension associated with repetitive lifting and holding weights overhead. Ryan and Salciccoli (1976) described 5 adolescent males ranging in age from 14-17 years, with fractures of the distal radial epiphysis; two patients had sustained bilateral fractures. All had been executing the military press at the time of the injury. All of the fractures were of a Type II epiphysis fracture of the distal radius as described by Salter (1963). Of the seven fractures in the five patients, three sustained associated fractures of the distal ulnar not through the
epiphysis of the ulnar. We have seen 2 adolescent weight-lifters with fractures of the distal radial epiphysis also within the last year.

This patient presented with a Colles fracture, a previously undescribed injury in weightlifting. These injuries could be prevented by correct instruction in the technique of weightlifting and proper supervision. In order to prevent these serious wrist injuries it is vital to have a person at each end of the bar to hold it if the lifter loses control.

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I would like to thank Mr. D. S. Porter for permission to publish his case.

REFERENCES

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Colles' fracture due to weight lifting

P. H. Rowe

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