A cheating CT scan of knee

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Accepted 5th March, 2020

CASE REPORT

A 53-year-old man was presented to our hospital with pain in the left knee after he slipped and fell down with the knee. Initially the patient went to a local hospital where he did a computed tomography (CT) scan that showed a left patella fracture combined with distal femoral fracture (Figure 1: Panel A). Thereafter, he was transferred to our hospital for surgical management. On physical examination, there was swelling and tenderness on the left knee. In our hospital, we did a repeat check X ray and found there no fracture both in the femur and patella (Figure 1: Panel B), so we further performed another CT to determine whether there is a fracture or not (Figure 1: Panel C). Based on the radiographs taken in our hospital, a diagnosis of soft tissue injury was made and the patient’s knee was immobilized with a brace. Three weeks later, the patient recovered very well. From the case, we learned that auxiliary examination is not always dependable, doctors must check the patient’s history of present illness and conduct physical examination carefully before making a diagnosis and choosing the therapeutic regimen. Auxiliary examination is only a reference.

Figure 1: Computed tomography (CT) scan of left knee of the patient.