

## CLINICAL CASE VIGNETTES

### Congenital block vertebrae in lumbar spine

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A 34-year-old female visited our rheumatology clinic with the complaint of non-inflammatory back pain that usually occurred on bending down and radiated to bilateral lower limbs. A diagnosis of compressive neuropathy was suspected and an initially performed digital X-ray of lumbar spine revealed a rare congenital anomaly termed as 'Congenital block vertebrae' in the lumbar spine (Fig 1).

Block vertebrae, a congenital anomaly, occurs due to improper segmentation of vertebral column during fetal development. Improper segmentation leads to fusion of adjacent vertebrae through their inter-vertebral disc. The most common site of this deformity is cervical spine and the lumbar vertebral involvement is rare. The disco-vertebral articulation is always involved and depending on the degree of involvement, the presenting complaints could be either neurological due to the compression of nerve roots or scoliosis due to the vertebral deformity.

Fig 1: Lateral view of the X-ray of lumbar spine showing fusion of L3-L4 vertebrae resulting in congenital block vertebrae



**Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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