A 28-year-old woman presented to the emergency department with left lateral knee pain after a motor vehicle crash. There was no indication of superficial trauma or deficit on physical examination. Plain radiographs of the left knee (image A and image B) showed patella fragments, which were determined to be secondary to congenital bipartite patella. The patient was treated conservatively with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug therapy, and rest, ice, compression, and elevation were suggested.

Bipartite patella is caused by a failure in ossification of the patellar cartilage at its secondary ossification center. Bipartite patella is usually asymptomatic, but symptoms can be exacerbated by physical activity secondary to microtrauma. Management is dependent on the degree of disability. Conservative management includes restriction of activity, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug therapy, and corticosteroid joint injections for sustained pain relief. If conservative management fails or symptoms worsen, surgical intervention may be necessary. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2016.158)

References

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