Sacral insufficiency fractures as an unsuspected cause of low back pain

Sir. We read with interest the article by Dasgupta et al. [1] on sacral insufficiency fractures as an unsuspected cause of low back pain. We agree that this diagnosis is often missed in clinical practice, and appreciate the effort to increase awareness of this condition.

There have been many reports on this subject, encompassing over 300 cases [2–8]. In our series of 20 patients admitted to a rheumatology division, sacral insufficiency fractures were present in 1.8% of female patients over 55 yr of age [2]. With a simple and quick examination encompassing palpation and pelvic stress tests, patients can be selected for radiological confirmation and appropriate treatment, as pointed out several times [9]. In our opinion, a fracture should be suspected in any elderly patient experiencing difficulty getting out of bed because of pain in the lumbar or pelvic regions, even when trauma or sudden onset cannot be recalled.

We hope that this practically always self-healing, but often excruciatingly painful, condition will be considered appropriately in clinical practice and would welcome a prospective trial on diagnostic and therapeutic measures.

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