

Prolonged Transient Hemiplegia in Collegiate Ice Hockey Player

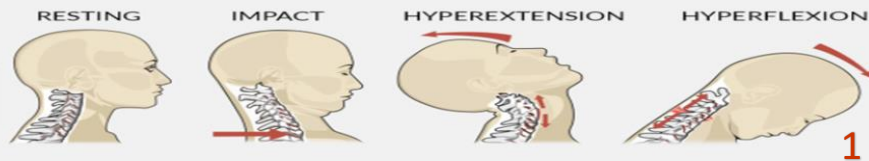
Washington University in St. Louis
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Ashwin Leo, M3, Washington University School of Medicine
Gregory Decker, MD, Washington University School of Medicine

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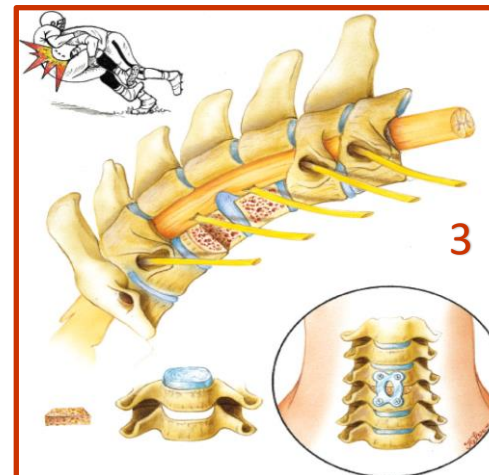
Case Description

- Patient is healthy **21-year-old hockey player**
- Sustained cervical **whiplash injury** after fall on ice
- **Right hemiparesis and sensory abnormalities**
- X-Ray, CT, MRI of spine and CT Angiography of neck unremarkable except for reversal of normal lordosis **concerning for spear tackler's spine**



Case Resolution

- At 24 hours, majority of RUE motor and sensory symptoms resolved; complete resolution at 5 days
- At 6 weeks, patient's RLE strength returned despite mild residual sensory deficits
- At 6 weeks, repeat imaging was still **unremarkable**
- At 18 weeks, **all symptoms resolved** except mildly decreased RLE proprioception
- **Patient cleared to return to non-contact drills but not cleared for contact play**



Case Diagnosis

- Majority of RUE symptoms resolved in 24 hours
- Majority of RLE symptoms resolved in 6 weeks
- Cervical cord neuropraxia (**CCN**) or Spinal cord injury w/o radiographic abnormality (**SCIWORA**)
- **Gray diagnostic area exists between the two**
- Our case has elements of both but leans SCIWORA
- CCN typically resolves in 48 hours
- SCIWORA more likely to persist beyond 48 hours

Return to Play (CCN and SCIWORA)

- **Risk stratification** from single to multiple episodes
- Single episode generally leads to clearance
- >2 episodes generally leads to contraindication
- **Other spinal abnormalities** can alter decision
- Return to play guidelines are controversial
- **Tremendous extrinsic pressure on athletes**
- Further research needed for well-defined guidelines

Image 1: Representation of Whiplash

Image 2: Our Patient's Lateral Cervical Spine X-Ray

Image 3: Representation of Cervical Cord Neuropraxia

