Ossification of the Yellow Ligament in Thoracic Spine

Key words: ossification of the yellow ligament, thoracic spine, myelo-CT

Figure 1. Myelo-CT demonstrated a high-density area, suggesting ossification of the yellow ligament at the T9 level.

Figure 2. MRI (FLAIR imaging) of the thoracic spine also showed an abnormal finding at the T9 level.

A 59-year-old woman visited the Department of Neurology at our hospital complaining of numbness of the left lower extremity, and gait disturbance. She had a waddling gait, and deep tendon reflexes were increased in the left lower extremity. Grade 4/5 weakness of the left leg was present by manual muscle testing. Sagittal myelo-CT demonstrated a high-density area, suggesting ossification of the yellow ligament at the T9 level, as indicated by the arrow in Fig. 1A.

Since a similar finding was evident in coronal myelo-CT (Fig. 1B), ossification of the yellow ligament was diagnosed. MRI (FLAIR imaging) of the thoracic spine also showed an abnormal finding at the T9 level, as indicated by arrows in Fig. 2.

After diagnosis, she underwent laminectomy of T8, T9 and T10. The numbness of her lower extremities, and her gait disturbance resolved.

Hirohisa Okuma and Yasuhisa Kitagawa*
From the Department of Neurology, Tokai University Tokyo Hospital and *Tokai University Hachioji Hospital
Received for publication May 31, 2005; Accepted for publication June 15, 2005
Reprint requests should be addressed to Dr. Hirohisa Okuma, the Department of Neurology, Tokai University Tokyo Hospital, 1-2-5 Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0053