

Reconsideration of Disappearing and Fusing Wrists

To the Editor:

Please “bear” with me, but the diagnosis offered by Wegner, *et al*¹ is challenged. The wrist alterations in the presented radiologic image¹ are identical to those noted in Figure 1 presented here, except that in this instance, it has progressed to partial fusion. However, neither this radiograph nor the one in the Wegner, *et al*¹ report actually represents rheumatoid arthritis (RA), and Figure 1 here is that of the manus of a black bear, *Ursus americanus* OMNH (Oklahoma Museum of Natural History) 33-0-S1. Humans and bears share similar wrist anatomy. Relative sparing of metacarpophalangeal joints and erosive changes in distal interphalangeal joints would be distinctly unusual in RA, but are classic for those of spondyloarthritis (SpA), especially of the psoriatic variety². While there has been discussion about splitting or lumping peripherally limited erosive disease³, the variety of erosive arthritis that occurs in non-human mammals⁴ and specifically in bears⁵ has been clearly identified as SpA. In the case cited herein, syndesmophytes were present and erosive disease was also noted in 1 elbow. There is actually no evidence for occurrence of RA in non-human animals, if the authors considered the alternative diagnosis of SpA and not just ankylosing spondylitis.

BRUCE M. ROTHSCHILD, MD, Department of Medicine, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, and Department of Vertebrate Paleontology, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Address correspondence to Dr. B.M. Rothschild, Department of Medicine, West Virginia University College of Medicine, Morgantown, West Virginia 26501, USA. E-mail: spondylair@gmail.com

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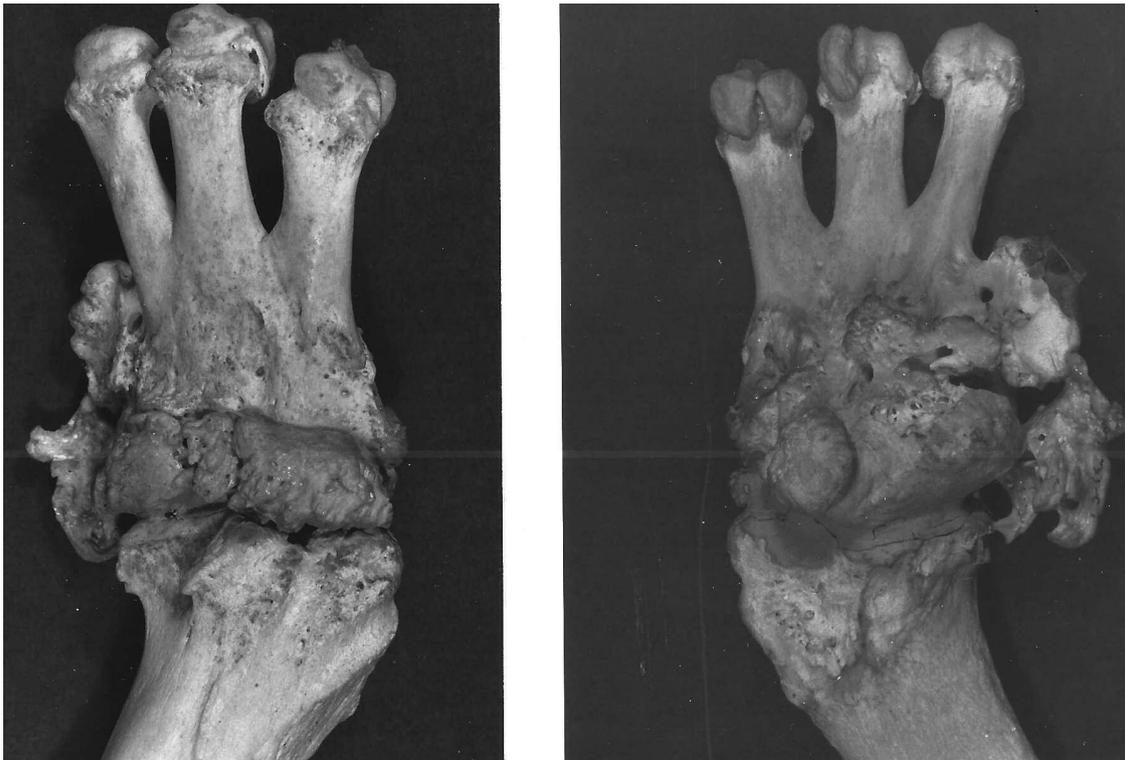


Figure 1. Dorsal (left) and ventral (right) views of right wrist of OMNH 33-0-S1 *Ursus americanus*. Visible is loss of carpal bones with fusion of residual row. OMNH: Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.