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 image\(^1\) 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 spondyloarthropathy (SpA), especially of the psoriatic variety\(^2\). While there has been discussion about splitting or lumping peripherally limited erosive disease\(^3\), the variety of erosive arthritis that occurs in non-human mammals\(^4\) and specifically in bears\(^5\) has been clearly identified as SpA. In the case sited 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.

REFERENCES


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