Jaccoud Arthropathy: A Pictorial Perspective

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A 55-year-old woman with a known case of systemic lupus erythematosus (serositis, hematological, and cutaneous involvement) was diagnosed at 37 years of age and presented with complaints of symmetric polyarthritis affecting metacarpophalangeal (MCP) and proximal interphalangeal (PIP) of the hands with a deformity for 5 years. She was on treatment with steroids, antimalarials, and azathioprine. On examination, she had Z-deformity of thumb, ulnar deviation of fingers, MCP subluxation, and swan-neck deformities that were reducible with manipulation (Figs 1 and 2). X-ray helped clinch the diagnosis (Fig. 3). Jaccoud arthropathy is a nontreating, long-lasting joint condition characterized by the relaxation and elongation of structures and tendons around the joints in the hands and/or feet. The resulting deformities are painless, can be adjusted through manipulation, and do not hinder normal movement. This arthropathy does not involve ongoing inflammation of the joints. Jaccoud’s arthropathy is not frequently observed in Western countries. However, it holds clinical importance because its presence necessitates additional investigation to identify possible underlying causes such as rheumatic diseases, systemic lupus erythematosus around 5% and other conditions such as Sjögren syndrome, scleroderma, dermatomyositis, psoriatic arthritis, vasculitis, ankylosing spondylitis, mixed connective tissue disease, and pyrophosphate deposition disease. Fortunately, this arthropathy has the potential to be corrected or improved.

Learning Points

- This arthropathy does not involve ongoing inflammation of the joints.
- The deformities are painless, “correctable” with manipulation, and do not cause functional impairment, unlike other erosive arthritis.