Baastrup disease
An underdiagnosed etiology of chronic low back pain

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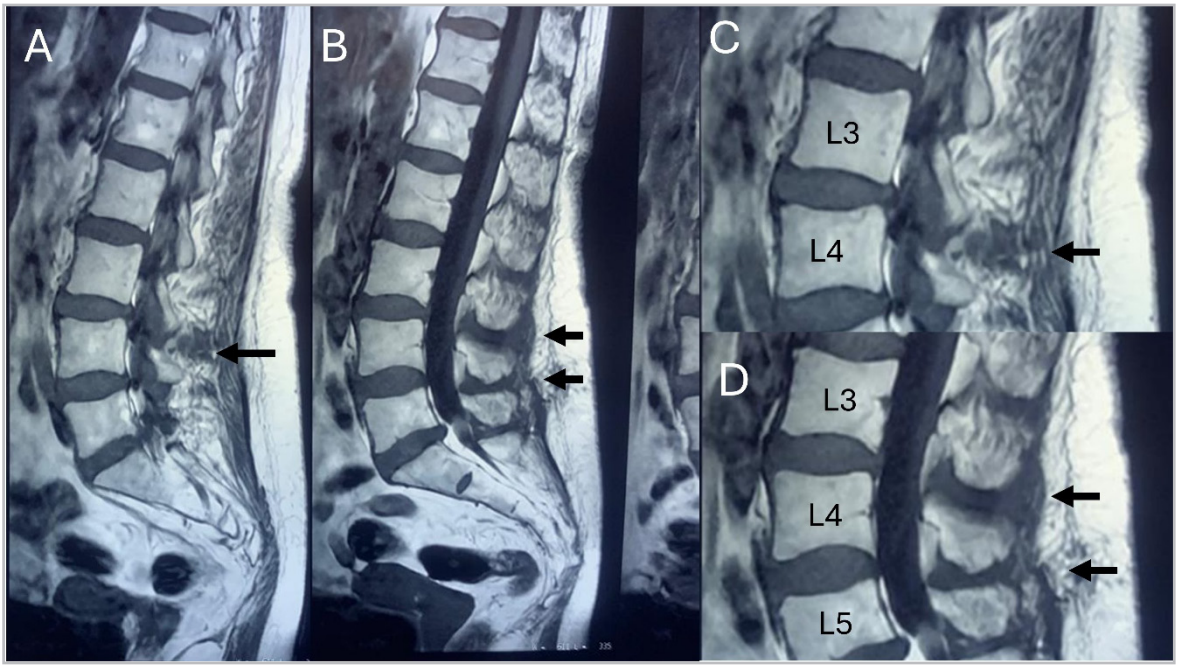

Figure 1. *Sagittal magnetic resonance images. (A and B): degenerative changes in the spinous processes of L3-L4-L5 with an interspinous bursa at L3-L4, spinous process hypertrophy, flattening of the contact surfaces and cystic lesions at L4-L5. (C and D): close-ups.*

Baastrup disease (BD), described in 1933, is a little-known cause of low back pain (1). It is characterized by axial low back pain caused by contact between the spinous processes during extension. This condition is associated with degenerative lumbar changes, and its prevalence increases with age (up to 81% in people over the age of 80), leading to chronic low back pain. It is part of the lumbar degenerative process and is often undiagnosed.

The imaging findings include spinous process hypertrophy, flattening of the contact surfaces and cystic lesions in 90%, as well as the formation of bursae (Figure 1). Baastrup disease is treated with percutaneous injections of long-acting corticosteroids to treat the inflammation and pain, with significant improvements in pain scores beyond one year. Joint treatment of the degenerative lumbar disorders that often coexist in these patients is also recommended (2).

References

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