Incidental Syringes: Characterization, Evaluation, and Clinical Significance

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Purpose
Idiopathic or congenital dilatation of the central spinal canal is to be distinguished from secondary causes of hydromyelia (1). The present study was undertaken to characterize this entity, assess patterns of its further evaluation, and determine its clinical significance.

Materials & Methods
We identified all patients (41) in whom incidental hydromyelia was found on MR imaging at our institution over the past 5 years. The lesions were characterized by location, length, and diameter. Whether follow-up imaging was performed and what type of imaging were determined. Finally, the clinical significance of the lesion was assessed in each individual.

Results
Most cervical hydromyelias occurred in the lower segment and half of the thoracic hydromyelias in the mid segment. Only one third of cases underwent any kind of follow-up imaging (serial MR imaging ± gadolinium). One third of cases had a history of prior trauma, the clinical significance of which typically was doubtful, and the rest had nonrelevant histories.

Conclusion
Incidental syringes most often occur in the low cervical and mid thoracic cord, the large majority of which at our institution receive no follow-up imaging. This entity has no demonstrable clinical significance.

References