The Clicking Larynx: A New Radiologic Diagnosis

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Purpose
To describe the clinical features, imaging findings, and treatment options for a group of seven patients with a clicking sound emanating from their laryngeal area with head movement or swallowing.

Materials & Methods
We retrospectively reviewed the clinical and radiographic data of seven patients who presented to the otolaryngology service with a laryngeal click. All patients were evaluated clinically and with unenhanced CT in the neutral and turned head positions. Surgical intervention was completed in each case with surgical correlation with radiologic findings available. Clinical outcome was also assessed in each case.

Results
There were three male and four female patients with an age range of 18–43 years, mean 31 years. Duration of symptoms was 4 months to 2 years. Three patients had a history of prior neck trauma. CT findings included: superior elongation of the superior cornu of the thyroid cartilage (5/7), posterior elongation of the thyroid cartilage ala (1/7), and an asymmetrically large cervical vertebra transverse process (1/7). All patients underwent laryngoplasty with complete resolution of symptoms observed.

Conclusion
Patients who present with a “clicking larynx” should be evaluated with unenhanced CT examination in the neutral and turned head position to help delineate a potential cause. In those patients who have an identifiable cause for the laryngeal click, laryngoplasty may be an effective treatment.

References