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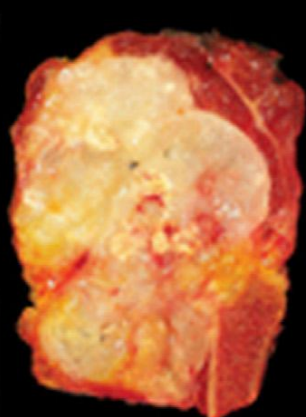
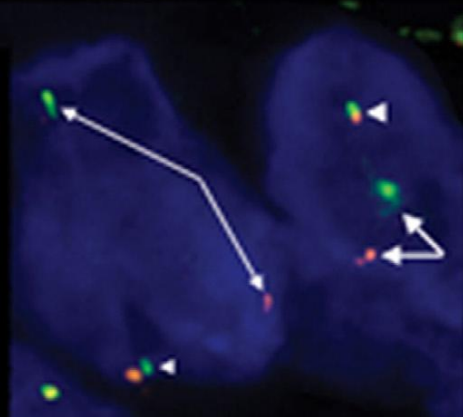
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 HIGH-YIELD PATHOLOGY

# Bone and Soft Tissue Pathology

Andrew Horvai



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 HIGH-YIELD PATHOLOGY

# Bone and Soft Tissue Pathology

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 **HIGH-YIELD PATHOLOGY**

# Bone and Soft Tissue Pathology

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BONE AND SOFT TISSUE PATHOLOGY

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*To Terrie, Brooke, my dear mother, Gizella, and my late father George*  
Andrew E. Horvai, MD, PhD

*To my wife, Heike, and my parents, Sieglinde and Bruno Link*  
Thomas Link, MD

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Specimens from the musculoskeletal system are infrequently encountered by the practicing pathologist. Many of the most common diagnoses, such as traumatic fractures, usually do not require tissue diagnosis. Furthermore, the rarity of bone and soft tissue neoplasms and the disfiguring surgery endorsed by a malignant diagnosis present unique challenges for the pathologist. The difficulty is compounded by the myriad diagnostic entities and the absence of universal classification systems. For the pathologist-in-training, learning the material has been equally demanding. The purpose of this textbook is to present the pathology of bone and soft tissue in a practical, focused, and easily accessible format. The text emphasizes the diagnostic hallmarks of each entity, to allow straightforward, rapid comparison of diagnoses within a single differential. More than 1000 illustrations are provided to supplement the critical details of the text. To achieve this format, discussion of minutiae and controversies is reduced.

In most organ systems, non-neoplastic diseases constitute a significant proportion of diagnoses. Although this is also true of the skeletal system, the pathology of

somatic soft tissue is dominated by neoplasms. The resulting disparity between the bone and soft tissue sections of this book, thus, reveals the reality of routine pathology practice rather than omission.

Finally, although this book is intended for pathologists, diseases of bone cannot be diagnosed accurately without evaluation of corresponding radiographic studies. The fundamental radiographic findings for each diagnosis are described and illustrated with high-quality images so that the pathologist can effectively contribute to the multidisciplinary care of the patient.

This volume would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the contributors. Thanks especially to Dr. Andrew Folpe and Dr. Carrie Inwards for their assistance and guidance.

**Andrew E. Horvai, MD, PhD**  
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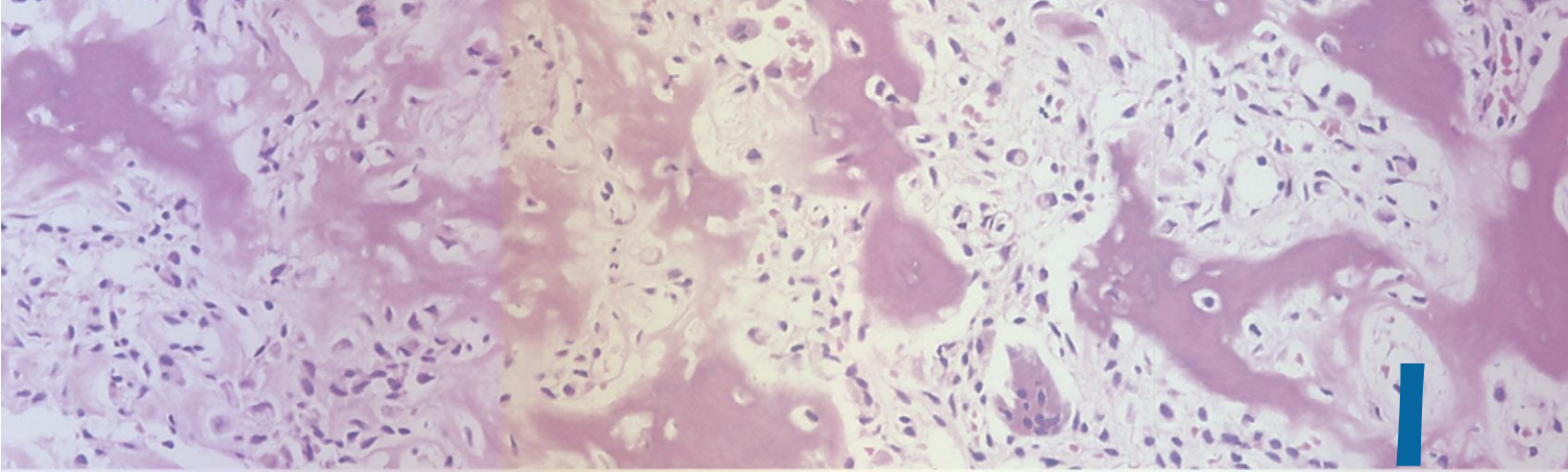
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Michael Barnes, MD



# BONE AND JOINT



# A. METABOLIC CONDITIONS

## PAGET DISEASE

### Definition and synonyms

- A chronic skeletal bone disorder due to overactivation of osteoblasts and osteoclasts with resultant abnormal remodeling of bone (osteitis deformans)

### Clinical features

#### Epidemiology and presentation

- Bone pain, warmth, tenderness, and arthritis
- Localized skeletal deformity and spinal stenosis
- Stress fractures with minimal trauma
- Headaches, deafness, and increased hat size with skull involvement
- Markedly elevated serum alkaline phosphatase with normal calcium and phosphorus

#### Prognosis and treatment

- Usually asymptomatic; may be focal, multifocal, and progressive
- Severe forms show marked deformity, intractable pain, neurologic symptoms, and cardiac failure
- One to 3% of cases complicated by sarcoma (osteosarcoma, undifferentiated sarcoma)
- Asymptomatic patients require no treatment except in extensive skull involvement
- Symptomatic treatment with analgesics
- Bisphosphonates and calcitonin medical therapy

### Radiology

- Osteolytic change in the early phase
- Initial lesions may be destructive and radiolucent, especially in the skull (osteoporosis circumscripta)
- Later bone deformity, thick cortical bone, coarsening of bone trabeculae, and loss of demarcation between cortical and trabecular bone
- Window frame appearance of vertebral bodies: increased density of the vertebral body periphery and accentuation of the trabeculae in the body
- Hot on bone scans unless it is in the inactive phase
- Stress fractures with multiple fissures in long bones at later stages
- Focal bone proliferation with malignant transformation

### Pathology

#### Gross

- Bone is hyperemic with distortion of the normal contour and structure

### Histology

- Osteolytic phase shows primarily osteoclastic activity with increased multinucleated osteoclasts mimicking hyperparathyroidism
- Active or mixed phase shows increased osteoclastic and osteoblastic activity with remodeling, fibrosis, and osteoid formation
- Thick and thin bone trabeculae are often present
- Sclerotic phase shows prominent irregular, wavy cement lines that reflect abnormal remodeling and may be the only feature in inactive disease
- Reticulin stain highlights disorganization of lamellar bone

### Main differential diagnosis

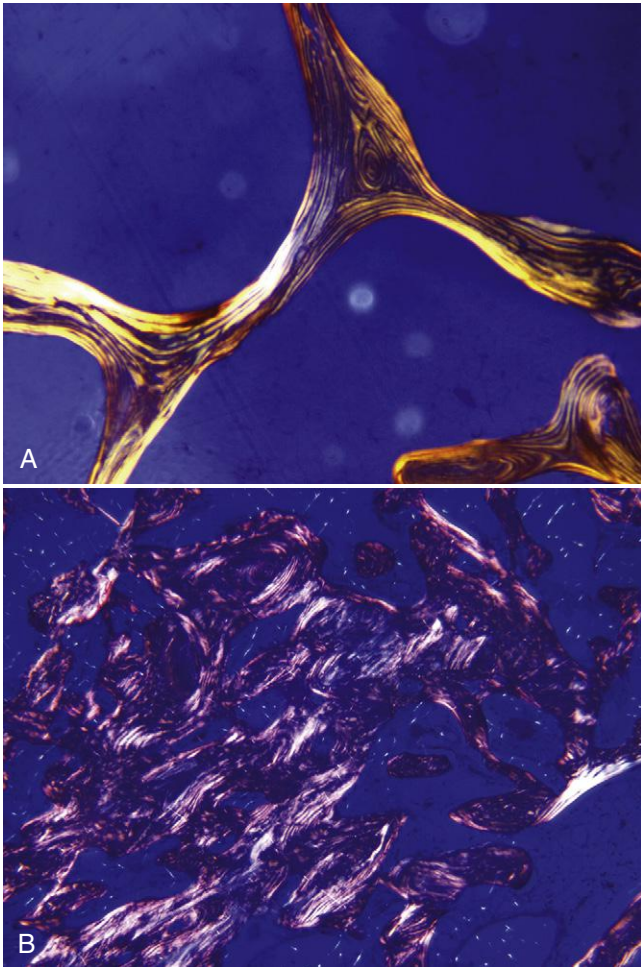
- Hyperphosphatasia
- Polyostotic fibrous dysplasia
- Chronic osteomyelitis



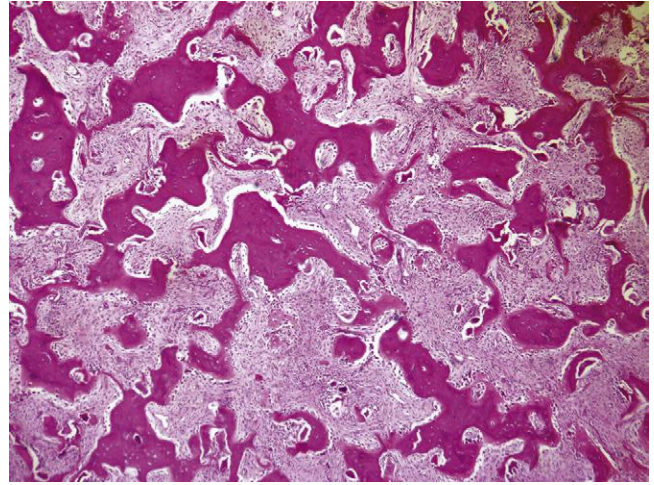
Fig 1. Lateral radiograph of the skull in a patient with Paget disease showing thickening of the cortex with increased sclerosis mixed with lytic areas, also referred to as a cotton-wool appearance.



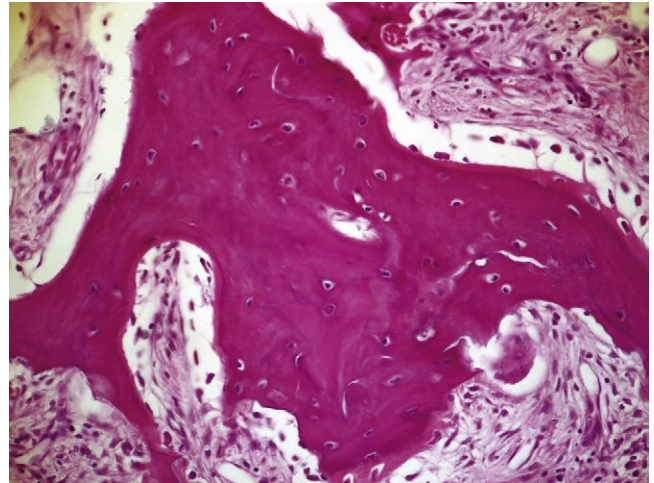
**Fig 2.** Lateral radiograph of the right tibia and fibula (**A**) and anteroposterior radiographs of the ankle (**B**) and knee (**C**). Note transverse fractures in the tibia and fibula, which are common because bone is inherently weak. There is marked cortical thickening of the tibia extending from the articular surface of the knee to the articular surface of the ankle. Deformity of the right tibia with anterior and lateral bowing is also shown.



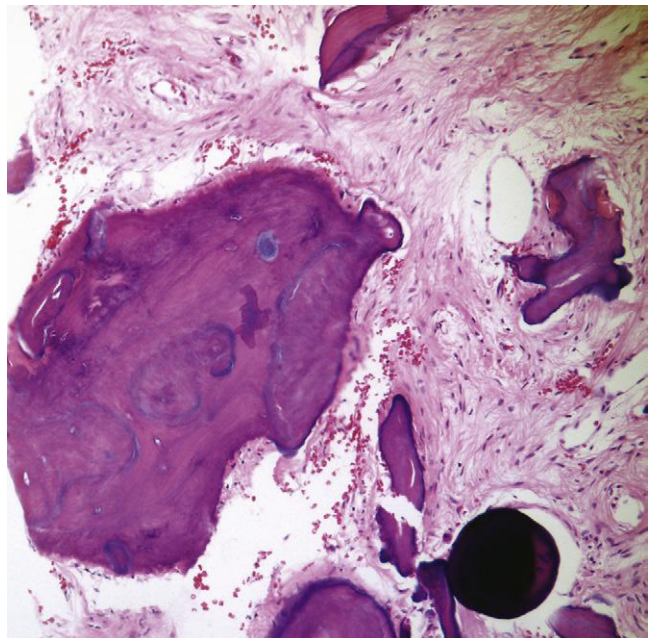
**Fig 3.** Polarized light histopathology of normal bone (**A**) and bone from a patient with Paget disease (**B**). In Paget disease, the laminar sheetlike orientation is disrupted, leading to less refractile, interrupted collagen.



**Fig 4.** Scanning magnification in a patient with Paget disease showing thick and thin irregular trabecular bone, extensive fibrosis, and increased vascularity of bone marrow and irregular cement lines.



**Fig 5.** Higher magnification in a patient with Paget disease showing thick and prominent trabecular bone with large multinucleated osteoclasts.



**Fig 6.** In the sclerotic phase of Paget disease bone is formed with thickened, irregular trabeculae with osteoid seams creating a mosaic pattern of cement lines. This reflects prior incidences of bone resorption and formation.

## Definition and synonyms

- Decrease in bone density of normally mineralized bone; the World Health Organization defines it as a bone mineral density that is 2.5 standard deviations (SD) below the mean peak value in young adults (porous bone)

## Clinical features

### Epidemiology

- Most common metabolic bone disease
- Most common in patients older than 50 years
- Postmenopausal women are affected because of estrogen deficiency
- Secondary causes include endocrine disorders, gastrointestinal disturbances, drugs, and immobilization
- Risk factors include smoking, caffeine, and alcohol consumption
- 1.5 million fractures per year leading to 37,500 deaths per year in the United States

### Presentation

- Back pain, loss of height, thoracic kyphosis, fractures with minimal trauma
- Vertebral crush fractures and spontaneous fractures in severe form
- Cancellous compartment of vertebral bone, pelvis, and wrist most commonly affected
- Normal serum parathyroid hormone, calcium, phosphorus, and alkaline phosphatase

### Prognosis and treatment

- Increased mortality rate due to complications of fractures; better prognosis with early maintained treatment
- Vitamin D and calcium supplementation
- Bisphosphonates increase bone thickness and lower the risk for fractures and are used for prevention and treatment
- Selective estrogen receptor modulators (raloxifene) act on bone to slow resorption by osteoclasts

## Radiology

- Substantial bone loss (approximately 30% to 40%) must occur before routine radiographs are sensitive enough to detect
- Techniques to measure bone mineral density include dual energy X-ray absorptiometry and quantitative CT
- A bone mineral density 2.5 SD below the mean of a young adult is considered osteoporosis (T score of  $-2.5$ ); between 1 and 2.5 SD below the mean is osteopenia
- Conventional radiographs show cortical thinning, increased radiolucency, vertebral compression, widening and swelling of intervertebral disks
- Three types of spinal fractures are identified in advanced disease: wedge fractures, biconcave fractures, and crush fractures
- The most severe complication is proximal femur fracture, typically femoral neck and intertrochanteric

## Pathology

### Gross

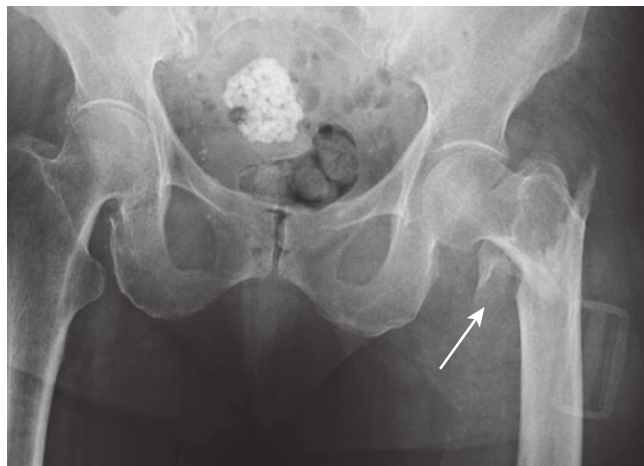
- Loss of trabecular bone
- Kyphosis of the thoracic spine due to osteoporosis involving more than one vertebral body (dowager sign)

### Histology

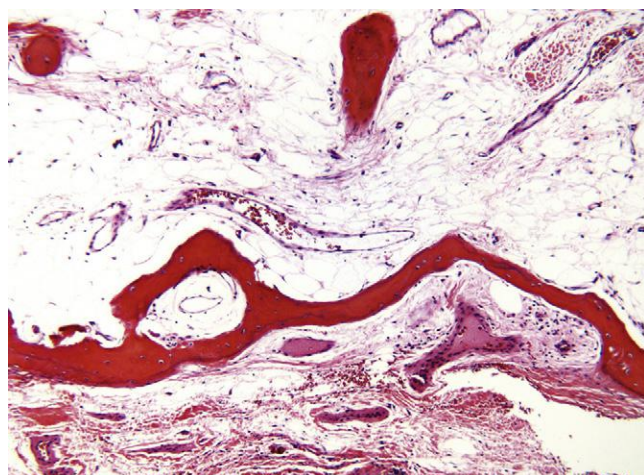
- Cortical and trabecular bone is decreased with trabecular bone more severely affected
- Bone cortices are thin with widened haversian canals
- Osteoid seams are of normal width
- Trabeculae are thin, discontinuous, and separated

### Main differential diagnosis

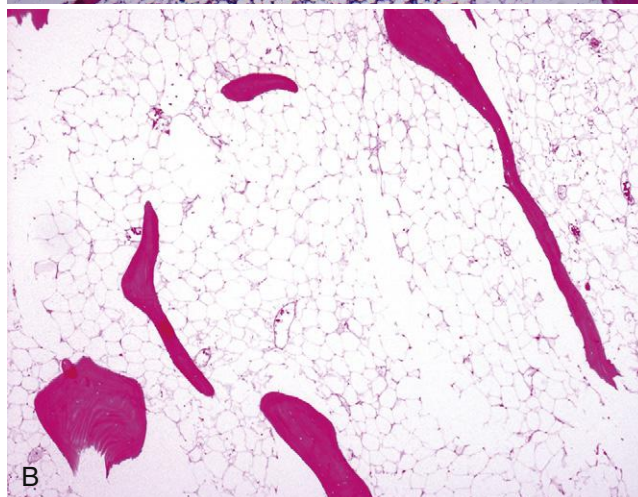
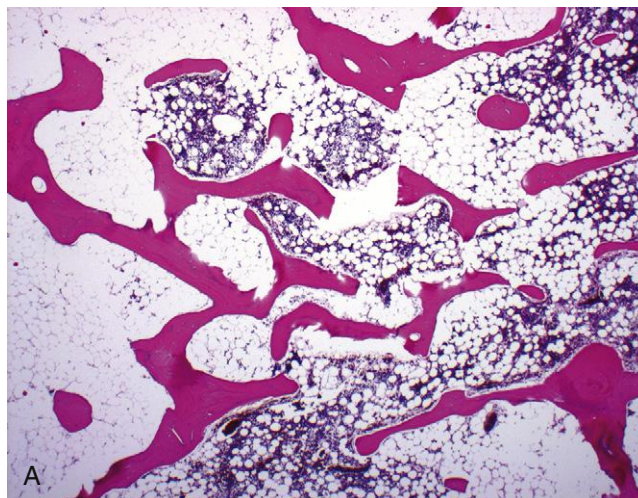
- Osteogenesis imperfecta
- Malabsorption
- Cushing's syndrome
- Osteomalacia



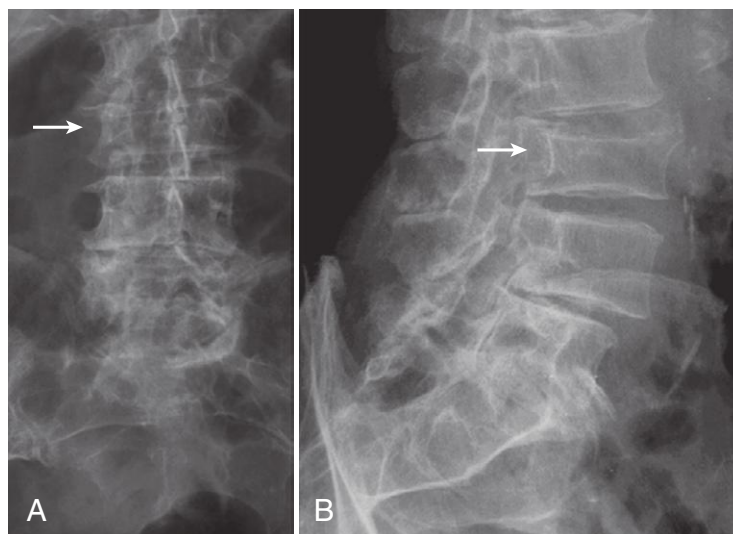
**Fig 1.** Anteroposterior plain radiograph of the pelvis in a female patient with an osteoporotic intertrochanteric left proximal femur fracture with avulsion of the lesser trochanter (*arrow*). The large calcification in the pelvic soft tissues is a uterine fibroid.



**Fig 2.** Osteoporotic bone initially affects the trabeculae in the medulla, but this more advanced example shows involvement of the cortex (*bottom*) that is markedly thinned.



**Fig 3.** Scanning magnification of normal bone with broad, anastomosing trabeculae (**A**) and bone from a patient with osteoporosis (**B**) showing thin, separated, and discontinuous trabeculae.



**Fig 4.** Sequelae of osteoporosis in the lumbar spine. Anteroposterior (**A**) and lateral (**B**) radiographs of the lumbar spine with an osteoporotic fracture of the L3 vertebra (*arrow*) associated with a concave end plate and height loss of the vertebral body.

# OSTEOMALACIA

## Definition

- General term for a defect in skeletal mineralization that results in the accumulation of unmineralized bone (osteoid); rickets represents defective endochondral ossification at the growth plate resulting in dwarfism (see Osteogenesis Imperfecta, later)

## Clinical features

### Epidemiology

- Commonly seen in deficiencies or disorders of calcium, vitamin D, or phosphorus metabolism
- Aluminum and iron metal poisoning
- Associated with certain bone and soft tissue tumors (oncogenic osteomalacia), specifically phosphaturic mesenchymal tumor (see Section IIM, Phosphaturic Mesenchymal Tumor)

### Presentation

- Generalized musculoskeletal weakness and bone pain
- Fractures with minimal trauma, particularly in vertebral bodies and femoral necks
- Low vitamin D with or without low calcium or low phosphorus levels with high levels of alkaline phosphatase

### Prognosis and treatment

- May be a contributing factor to hip fractures in elderly patients
- Treatment is aimed at correcting vitamin deficiencies or underlying medical conditions
- Adequate sunlight exposure and supplemental oral calcium and vitamin D

## Radiology

- Symmetrical pseudofractures: unmineralized areas caused by rapid bone resorption and slow mineralization (Looser zones)
- Generalized osteopenia with coarse bone structure
- Multiple bilateral and symmetrical linear insufficiency fractures
- Technetium-99 bone scanning reveals multiple hot spots corresponding to pseudofractures and insufficiency fractures

## Pathology

### Gross

- Bone particularly from the vertebral column is soft, weak, and prone to fracture easily

### Histology

- Bone must be processed without decalcification, and usually embedded in plastic for sectioning
- Increased amount of unmineralized bone or osteoid, surface osteoid greater than 25% (normal is ~2%)
- Increase in osteoid seam thickness, presence of greater than five birefringent lamellar lines in the osteoid seam
- Decreased mineralization or calcification rate
- Tongues of uncalcified cartilage extending into metaphysis

### Ancillary studies

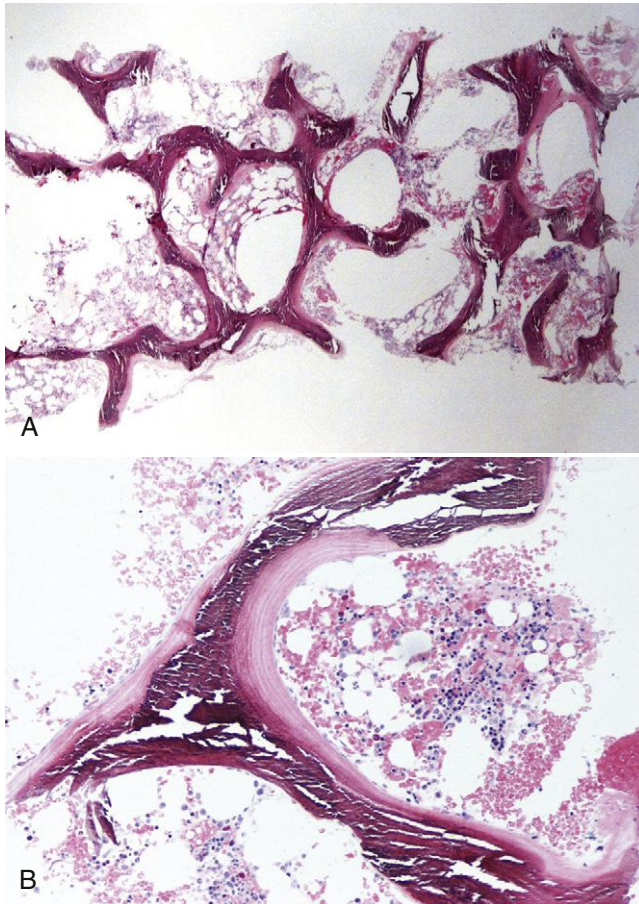
- Tetracycline taken before bone biopsy labels sites of new bone formation; a diminished number of osteoid seams taking up tetracycline reflects an absence of mineralization
- Osteoid evaluation can be performed using von Kossa, Goldner, modified trichrome, or Villanueva stain

### Main differential diagnosis

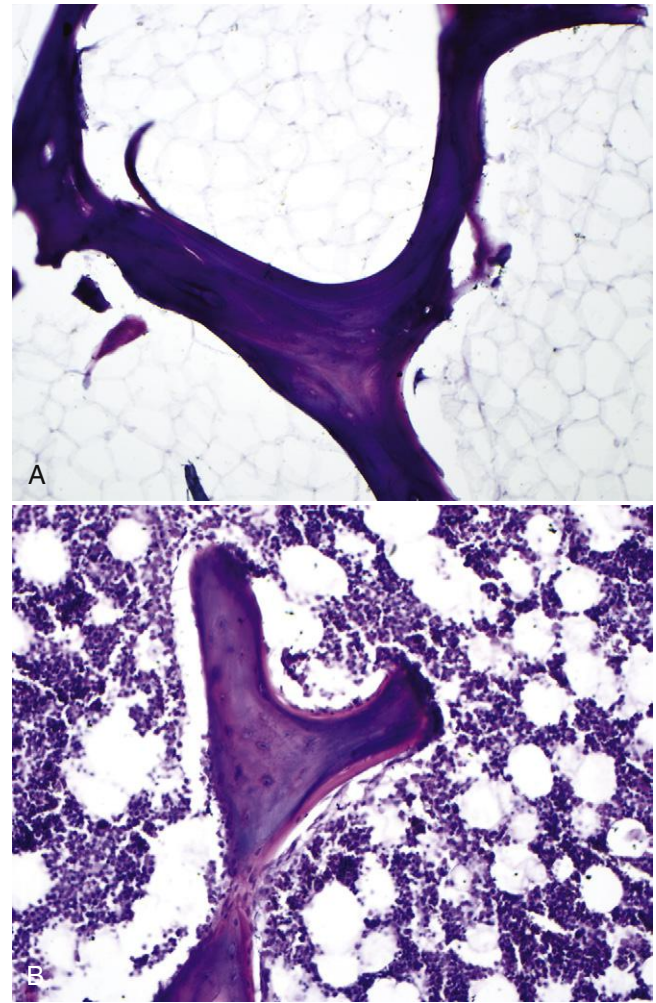
- Osteopenia, osteoporosis



Fig 1. Plain anteroposterior radiographs of bilateral feet in a patient with oncogenic osteomalacia. The bones are severely osteopenic, and a diaphyseal insufficiency fracture is visualized at the left third metatarsal (*arrow*).



**Fig 2.** Bone biopsy using von Kossa stain in an undecalcified section with osteomalacia. Osteoid is the eosinophilic unmineralized portion of bone at the surface of trabeculae. The mineralized front is stained dark gray to black (**A** and **B**). Note that a significant fraction of the bone (~50%) is unmineralized. (Courtesy of Roberto Garcia, MD.)



**Fig 3.** Undecalcified normal bone stained with hematoxylin-eosin (**A** and **B**). Compared with Figure 2, the mineralization front (*purple*) extends essentially up to the surface of the trabeculae, with very little unmineralized osteoid (*pink*).

## Definition

- A metabolic bone disorder due to vitamin D, calcium, or phosphate depletion that impairs mineralization of bones in children before growth plate closure, resulting in growth retardation and delayed skeletal development

## Clinical features

### Epidemiology

- Occurs only in children whose growth plates have not closed, before age 17 years in females and 19 years in males
- Boys and girls are equally affected
- Commonly due to vitamin D deficiency, also from abnormal metabolism of phosphate or gastrointestinal tract disorders
- Hypophosphatasia is a rare X-linked disease characterized by extremely low levels of alkaline phosphatase
- Rare autosomal recessive type I and II vitamin D-dependent rickets (VDDR) due to impaired renal synthesis of 1,25(OH)-D or organ hyporesponsiveness to vitamin D

### Presentation

- Clinical findings depend on age of onset and severity of defective mineralization
- Bone pain, tenderness, muscle weakness, fractures, and skeletal deformity are common
- Toddlers present with bowing of the legs; older children present with knock-knees
- Type II VDDR presents in childhood with bone deformity and total-body alopecia

### Prognosis and treatment

- No increase in morbidity with adequate treatment
- Prevention of vitamin D deficiency is achieved with adequate sunlight exposure and vitamin D supplementation

- Vitamin D deficiency is treated with ergocalciferol
- Patients with X-linked or idiopathic hypophosphatemia are treated with oral phosphate supplements and calcitriol
- Human recombinant growth hormone reduces phosphaturia
- Type I VDDR is treated with high-dose vitamin D

## Radiology

- Plain radiographs show widening and cupping of the metaphyseal region, widening of the growth plate, and fraying of the metaphysis
- Bowing of long bones
- Knock-knees (genu valgum)
- Beading of the ribs at the costochondral junctions (“rachitic rosary”)
- Symmetrical and linear pseudofractures (Looser zones)
- Early disease is radiographically difficult to diagnose with nonspecific findings (e.g., osteopenia)

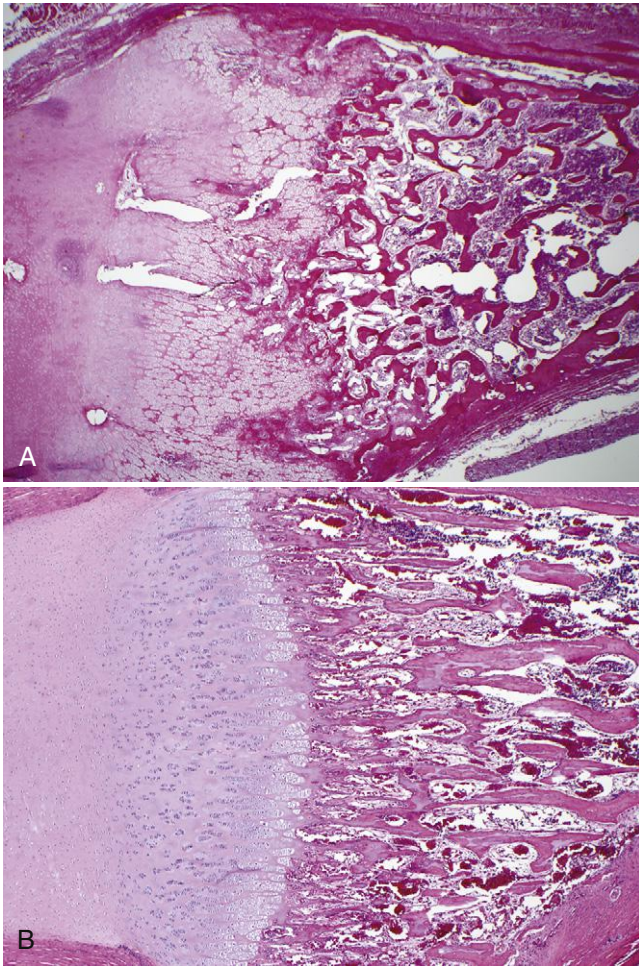
## Pathology

### Gross

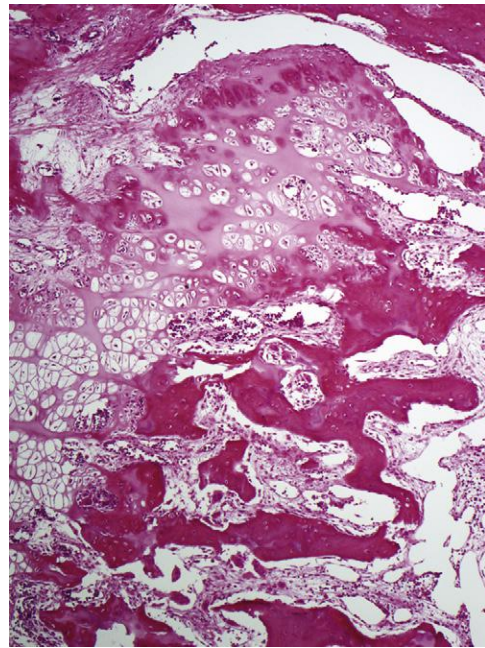
- Frontal bossing of skull, chest deformation, anterior protrusion of the sternum (pigeon breast deformity), kyphosis, scoliosis, and narrowing of the pelvis

### Histology

- Wide osteoid seams due to excess osteoid
- Failure of mineralization of the epiphyseal growth plate
- Disordered endochondral ossification with persistence of cartilage growth plate penetrating into medullary cavity



**Fig 1. A,** In this term infant with rickets, disorganized growth plate with cartilage penetrating into the medulla is seen at scanning magnification. **B,** By comparison, a normal growth plate has a sharp line of ossification replacing the cartilage of the growth plate.



**Fig 2.** Higher magnification demonstrates marked disorganization of the growth plate with haphazard mixture of hypertrophic zone of chondrocytes and bone in this infant with rickets.



**Fig 3.** Lateral radiograph of the tibia and fibula in a patient with rickets demonstrating bowing of the tibia and fibula as well as a pseudofracture at the tibia (Looser zone). Coarse trabecular bone structure in the proximal tibia, which is typical of osteomalacia and rickets, is shown.



# OSTEOGENESIS IMPERFECTA

## Definition and synonyms

- A family of genetic bone disorders primarily due to defective synthesis and secretion of collagen type I, characterized by fragile bones that break easily (brittle bone disease, Lobstein disease).

## Clinical features

### Epidemiology

- Rare heritable connective tissue disorder with most cases caused by a dominant mutation of type 1 collagen (*COL1A1* or *COL1A2*) genes
- Approximately 35% of patients with OI have no family history
- Type V through type VIII do not involve deficits in type I collagen genes
- Fibrogenesis imperfecta ossium is an extremely rare acquired disorder in which normal bone is replaced by a collagen-deficient tissue that is excessively fragile

### Presentation

- Flattened skull, scoliosis, and kyphotic collapsing deformities
- Discoloration of sclera
- Conductive and sensorineural hearing loss
- Small, misshapen, translucent gray-yellow teeth, with enamel that fractures easily (dentinogenesis imperfecta)
- Presentation varies depending on the type of OI inherited
  - Type I: mild bone fragility, rib deformities, blue sclerae
  - Type II: perinatal lethal
  - Type III: progressive severe deformities, fractures, short stature
  - Types IV to VII: moderate growth retardation, deformities
  - Type VIII: severe growth deficiency, normal sclerae

## Prognosis and treatment

- No cure currently; treatment directed toward preventing and controlling symptoms and maximizing independence
- Bisphosphonates improve bone strength
- Percutaneous surgical pinning of fractures and surgical insertion of metal rods through long bones
- Type II usually perinatal lethal

## Radiology

- Marked osteoporosis with severe thinning of cortical bone, multiple fractures, and nonunion of healed fractures
- Severe bony deformities
- Diaphysis is thin and wavy; metaphysis is expanded
- Calcified cartilaginous nodules at the growth plates look like popcorn on conventional radiographs

## Pathology

### Gross

- Biopsy rarely done on lesions
- Fetal cases may be seen at autopsy
- Widened and irregular growth plates
- Cartilaginous nodules at growth plates

### Histology

- Severe forms have increased osteocytes, absence of an organized trabecular pattern, and large areas of woven bone
- Bone trabeculae are thin, delicate, and widely separated
- Less severe forms have increased osteocytes with thin lamellar bone

## Main differential diagnosis

- Child abuse
- Vitamin D deficiency

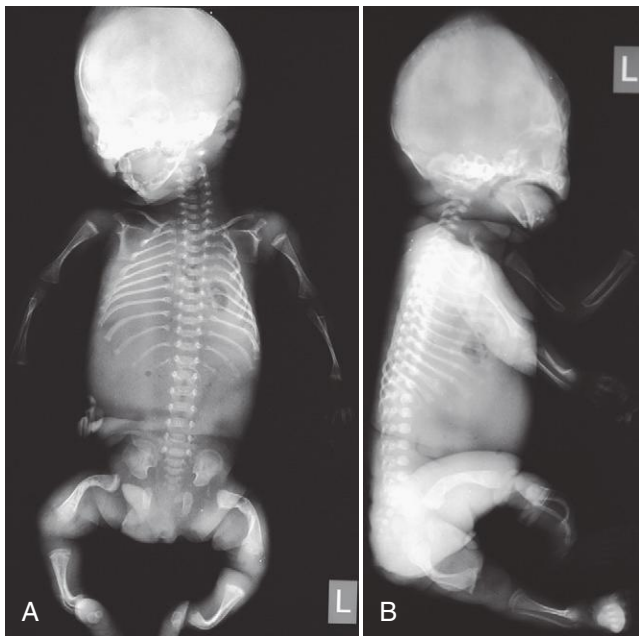


Fig 1. Anteroposterior (A) and lateral (B) radiographs of a fetus at 32 weeks' gestation with osteogenesis imperfecta type II. Bones show diffuse demineralization and limited calvarial mineralization. Limbs are severely malformed with very short, broad femurs and marked bowing of the tibiae and fibulae.

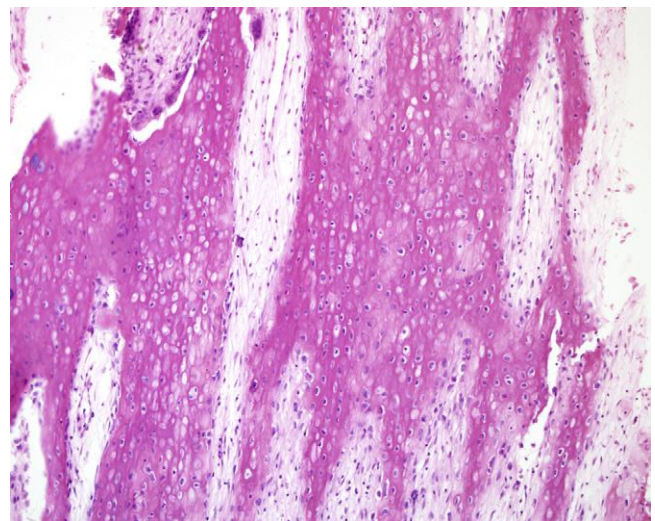


Fig 2. The bone is hypercellular with increased osteocytes in osteogenesis imperfecta.