Erosion of Lumbar Vertebral Bodies Due to Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

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Radiograph shows erosion of lumbar vertebral bodies simulating osteolytic lesions such as from malignancy. It involves three consecutive lumbar vertebral bodies and has a curvature corresponding to the abdominal aortic aneurysm that this patient proved to have. This is a result of the aneurysm's pounding on the vertebral bodies 70 to 80 times per minute for many years, just like the rib notchings secondary to tortuous intercostal arteries in patients with coarctation of the aorta. Back pain in a patient with a proven abdominal aortic aneurysm should raise suspicions of either an expanding or leaking aneurysm, but on rare occasions it may be due to erosion of the spine, as in this case.
Images in cardiovascular medicine. Erosion of lumbar vertebral bodies due to abdominal aortic aneurysm.
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