To assess the skeletal maturity at medial end of clavicle for known chronological age in subjects of Jodhpur region of Rajasthan

Author
Dr Lokendar Pal Singh
Senior Demonstrator, Department of Forensic Medicine
Bharatpur Medical College, Bharatpur, Rajasthan

Abstract
Background: The estimation of the age of persons who are assumed to be older than 18 years, it is particularly important to evaluate the progress of ossification of the epiphysis at medial end of clavicle, because all other developmental systems under examination have completed their growth by this time. The present study has been undertaken to study roentgen graphically the epiphyseal appearance and fusion of medial end of clavicle in subjects between age group of 20 to 25 years.

Material & Methods: A community based cross sectional study done on randomly selected subjects of both sexes having age between 20 to 25 years of age amongst the visiting to MLC –OPD in Mahatma Gandhi Hospital /Mathuradas Mathur Hospital Jodhpur who will fulfill the selection criteria, after proper history taken in relation to age estimation, availability of certificate indicating the age of birth or any such relevant document and physical examination.

Results: In present study, majority of cases show complete union at 22 years for both males and females. There is no variation in mean ages when sex comparison were made for the age of complete fusion.

Conclusion: We concluded from the present study that the complete epiphyseal union at medial end of clavicle in population of Jodhpur region occurred at the age of 22 years, in both males and females.

Keywords: Medial end of clavicle, Fusion, Epiphysis, Estimation of age.

Introduction
Age estimation is a common feature and problem of Forensic practice all over the world. In a country like ours it is more so, since illiteracy is a common feature and awareness for birth registration is too less. Scientific determination of age of an individual is a necessity for the law enforcement agencies in both civil and criminal matters. Various processes and methods of age estimation have been evolved through decades. As a matter of fact, ageing of the human being starts right from the moment of conception. During the span of life, various features of development and growth occur in chronological order. A systematic study of ossification of bones is helpful in assessing the age. The establishment or confirmation of personal identity is primarily the job of investigating agency but these investigating agencies or courts require the help of a medical man for that purpose1. The medical man by ascertaining age, sex, race and stature etc. assists the investigating agencies or courts to establish or
confirm identity of an individual in certain
criminal and civil cases.

The bones of the human skeleton develop
from separate ossification centers and growth
from these centers of ossification progresses
till the bone is completely formed. The
Clavicle is a long bone with a medullar cavity
like the other long bones and first fetal bone to
undergo ossification by membranous
ossification without prior endochondral
ossification, unlike other long bones. The
ossification initially starts with two primary
ossification centers, one medial (sterno-
pectoralis major end) and the other lateral
(trapezius deltoid end) during 5th and 6th fetal
week. So, to determine the period of age
between 20-25 years the epiphyseal union at
medial end of clavicle is studied in this part of the
world as several studies indicate that medial end
of clavicle unites at about the age of 22 years,
according to reddy fusion of medial end of
clavicle occur at 20-22 years.

To estimate the age of persons who are
assumed to be older than 18 years, it is
particularly important to evaluate the progress of
ossification of the epiphysis at medial end of
clavicle, because all other developmental systems
under examination have completed their
growth by this time. These changes can be
studied by means of radiological examination
(X-rays). From X-rays the earliest appearance
and subsequently the rate of growth of the
ossification centre can be watched.

Roentgenographical method has however its own
limitations though they are insignificant as
compared to those of the other methods. Continuity of the bone pattern at one level
may overlap and obliterate a break in the
continuity at another level and may further
obscure the picture. Also, the epiphyseal line
may be obscured by superimposition of
shadows of soft parts. Of the forensic methods
recommended for age estimation, evaluating
sexual maturity shows the largest range of
variation and therefore should be used for age
determination only in conjunction with an
evaluation of skeletal maturity and tooth
development. From the study of various
workers, it is well settled that there is not only
variance in the timing of epiphyseal union in
India and abroad but also in different states of
India. Variation in the time of union so
observed was attributed to factors like: climate,
race, nutrition, heredity, sex, dietary habits and
socio-economic status of population.

Owing to variation in climate, dietary,
hereditary and other factors affecting the people
different provinces of India, it cannot be
reasonably expected to formulate a uniform
standard for determination of age of union
epiphyses for the whole of India. Due to
the progressive development of bones, aging
of skeletons under the age of 25 can be more
easily accomplished utilizing the order of
epiphyseal fusion in the long bones. The medial
clavicular epiphysis matures relatively slowly.
In the human skeleton, it is generally the last
long bone epiphysis to fuse. Its developmental
stage is therefore useful when estimating age of
living persons involved in criminal proceedings.
The present study has been undertaken to study
roentgen graphically the epiphyseal appearance
and fusion of medial end of clavicle in subjects
between age group of 20 to 25 years.

**Material & Methods**

A community based cross sectional study
done on randomly selected subjects of both
sexes having age between 20 to 25 years of
age amongst the visiting to MLC –OPD in
Mahatma Gandhi Hospital /Mathuradas Mathur
Hospital Jodhpur who will fulfill the selection
criteria, after proper history taken in relation to
age estimation, availability of certificate
indicating the age of birth or any such relevant
document and physical examination.

**Inclusion criteria**

- MLC cases of supposed age 20-25 yrs
  brought for age estimation by police to
  dept. of forensic medicine and
toxicology included in the study.

- THOSE cases were selected who had a valid proof of exact date of birth is and also consented to participate in the study.
- The case selected from the easily available general population to i.e patients admitted in wards, their relatives and police personnel visited the hospital.

**Exclusion criteria**

- Individual with pathological, nutritional, development & endocrinal abnormality which affects the skeletal growth.
- Subjects not given consent for X-ray.
- Subjects not had valid documentation for proof of age/date of birth.
- Satisfying the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study who had documentation for date of birth younger then 20 years of age & above 25 yrs of age.

In this study, one hundred subjects were taken (fifty males and fifty females) from Jodhpur between age group of 20-25 years. The individuals selected for study were in the age range of 20 to 25 years further grouped into one year intervals of 20-21 yrs, 21-22 yrs, 22-23 yrs, 23-24 yrs, 24-25 yrs with equal numbers of both sexes included in each age interval.

Age of each individual studied was confirmed from a valid date of birth certificate like secondary school certificate, Aadhar card, driving license, passport, ration card or voter's identity card. Age, as stated by them was further confirmed by obtaining a copy of birth certificate or school record duly verified by the head of the school & confirmation from the parents.

The results for union of epiphyseal center for medial end of clavicle were assessed considering a stage five system proposed by Schmeling et al (2004) and categorized into following group centre not appeared, centre appeared but no fusion; centre appeared with partial fusion; completely fused with fusion line visible or not visible. These can be respectively compared to stages I to 5 of Schmeling’s five stage system. The stage 4 & 5 of Schmeling were considered in one group i.e. complete epiphyseal union with or without fusion line. Thus for the purpose of statistical analysis, the epiphyseal union was divided into following four stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>APPEARANCE AND FUSION</th>
<th>GRADE (in master chart)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Centre not appeared</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Centre appeared but no union</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Union started but incomplete</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV &amp; V</td>
<td>Complete union</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

Although equal number of subjects were selected in each age group; they were having different ages, and hence the mean age was calculated for each group (table 1).

**Males**

In 20-21 yrs of age group, 0 cases (0%) centre not appeared, 4 cases (40%) centre appeared but no fusion, 6 cases (60%) union started but incomplete, 0 cases complete union occurred. In 21-22 yrs age group centre not appeared in zero cases (0%) and 0 cases (0%) shows appearance of centre but no union occurred, in 6 cases (6%) union started but incomplete, in 4 cases (4%) complete union occurred. In age group 22-23 yrs, zero cases (0%) centre not appeared, in zero cases (0%) centre appeared but no union occurred in 6 cases (6%) union started but incomplete, in 4 cases (4%) complete union occurred. In age group 23-24 yrs, zero cases (0%) centre appeared but no union occurred, in two cases (2%) union started but incomplete and in 8 cases (80%) complete union occurred. In age group 24-25 yrs, 3 cases (30%) union started but incomplete & in seven cases (70%) complete union occurred (table 2).

**Females**

In age group 20-21 yrs, in zero cases (0%) centre not appeared, in 6 cases (60%) centre appeared but no union occurred, in 4 cases (4%) union started but incomplete, in 0 cases complete union
occurred. In age group of 21-22 yrs, centre not appeared in zero cases, centre appeared but no union in zero cases, in eight cases (80%) union started but incomplete, in 2 cases (2%) complete union occurred. In age group 22-23 yrs, 0 cases shows centre not appeared and 0 cases shows appearance of centre but no union, in three cases (30%) union started but incomplete and 7 cases (70%) shows complete union. In age group 23-24 yrs, 0 cases shows centre not appeared and 0 cases shows appearance of centre but no union, in three cases (30%) union started but incomplete and 7 cases (70%) cases shows complete union. In 24-25 yrs age group, complete union occurred in 10 cases i.e. 100% (table 3).

Comparison of the age range of complete union of medial end of clavicle for males and females does not show statistically significant relation (table 4). For the three different stages of fusion of the epiphyseal centre for medial end of clavicle the variation in mean age of males and females showed statistically significant results for stage C (incomplete union) of the present study. The commencement of fusion of epiphyseal centre started about more than a year earlier in females as compared to males (table 5).

Table 1: Mean Age of the Study Subjects for Different Age groups in both Sexes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>Male (Mean±SD)</th>
<th>Female (Mean±SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>20.38±0.35</td>
<td>20.37±0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>21.43±0.29</td>
<td>21.32±0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>22.41±0.23</td>
<td>22.37±0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>23.42±0.30</td>
<td>23.41±0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-25</td>
<td>24.42±0.31</td>
<td>24.4±0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Extent of Fusion of the Medial end of Clavicle in Different age group of Males

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of fusion</th>
<th>Age (in years) [N (%)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre not appeared</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre appeared but no union</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union started but incomplete</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Union</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Extent of Fusion of the Medial end of Clavicle in Different age group of Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of fusion</th>
<th>Age (in years) [N (%)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre not appeared</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre appeared but no union</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union started but incomplete</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Union</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Age of Incidence of Complete Union in All Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>For male No. of cases with complete union</th>
<th>For female No. of cases with complete union</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt;.05 (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&gt;.05 (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&gt;.05 (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>&gt;.05 (NS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Statistical Parameters by sex for Ossification Stages of Clavicle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean±SD</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre appeared but no union</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20.12±0.18</td>
<td>0.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20.2±0.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union started but incomplete</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21.92±1.26</td>
<td>0.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21.62±0.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Union</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23.29±1.08</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23.39±1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Controversies have existed from time to time especially in medicolegal work regarding the determination of age of a person. Age acquires more importance in cases of criminal responsibility, marriage, rape, personal identity etc. In the past, several illogical criteria have been used for assessing the age. A number of investigators have worked upon the age of union of various epiphyses but there are marked differences in their views.

The study group included 10 subjects of each sex for each age group. The mean ages for males and females were 20.38±0.35 years and 20.37±0.34 years for males and females respectively in 20–21 years age group; 21.43±0.29 years for males and 21.32±0.27 years for females in 21–22 years age group; 22.41±0.23 years for males and 22.3±0.24 years for females of 22–23 years age group; 23.42±0.30 years for males and 23.41±0.029 years for females in 23-24 years age group; 24.42±0.31 years for males and 24.4±0.29 years for females in 24-25 years age group.

In most studies done on age estimation using medial end of clavicle the variable age ranges have been included for study ranging from 3 to 32 years out of which majority of studies have included subjects ranging from 16 to 25 years of age. In a study done in Bhise SS et al\(^7\) broad age ranges of 9 to 25 yrs for males & 3 to 23 years for female were taken. In the study of Brown AA et al\(^8\) subjects ranging from 16 to 32 years of age were considered for the study of ossification of medial end of clavicle. In the study of Singh P et al\(^9\) the study subjects were from 16 to 25 years of age.

In present study, majority of cases show complete union at 22 years for both males and females. These findings are similar with results of Stevenson's P (1924)\(^10\); Parikh CK (India, 1990)\(^4\); Badgujar KP (Jaipur, 2006)\(^11\) and Singh P et al, (Patiala, 2001)\(^9\). Our results are lower in comparison to those of Davies & Parson (England, 1927)\(^12\); Krogman (U.S.A, 1962)\(^13\); Stewart (U.S.A, 1973)\(^14\) and Inderbir (1990)\(^15\) but higher than the age group reported by Flecker (Australia, 1932)\(^16\); Galstaun (Bengalis, 1937)\(^17\); Chaurasia (India, 1980)\(^18\) and Vij K (India, 2001)\(^19\). Our results are similar for those of females being 21-22 years and lower to that for males being 23-24 years for males in comparison to the study of Bhise SS et al (Mumbai, 2010)\(^7\).

There is no variation in mean ages when sex comparison were made for the age of complete fusion in our study which is similar to that of Stevenson's (White and Negroes, 1924)\(^10\); Flecker (Australia, 1932)\(^16\); Singh P et al, (Patiala, 2001)\(^9\) and Badgujar KP (Jaipur, 2006)\(^11\) but dissimilar to that of Galstaun (Bengalis, 1937)\(^17\); Brown AA et al. (Ghana, 2009)\(^8\) and Bhise SS et al (Mumbai, 2010)\(^7\) where female development preceded male development at the time of complete fusion.
Comparison of time of fusion of medial end of clavicle (in years) with that shown by other authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Earliest Union (Yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davies &amp; Parson</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleckler</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Australians</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galstaun</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Bengalis (Indians)</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14–16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krogman</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25–28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>26 or More</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaurassia</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>21–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parikh</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inderbir</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishan Vij</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>20–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmeling A</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20–26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badgujar KP</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Jaipur (India)</td>
<td>16–17</td>
<td>20–21</td>
<td>15–16</td>
<td>20–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown AA</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21–32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20–31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhise SS</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Mumbai (India)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>23–24</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>21–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Study</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Jodhpur (India)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

It is concluded from the present study that the complete epiphyseal union at medial end of clavicle in population of Jodhpur region occurred at the age of 22 years, in both males and females. Hence, epiphyseal union of medial end of clavicle can be used as a parameter to ascertain age between 20–25 years along with other bony parameters. However, these figures cannot be applied to the other races and geographical areas in criminal investigations as different races and different populations have variations in the age of union of medial end of clavicle.

**References**

6. Schmeling A, Schulz R, Reisinger W, MUhler M. Studies on the time frame for ossification of the medial clavicular epiphyseal cartilage in conventional


