



Vascular Interventions Case Report

## Corona mortis in the setting of pelvic trauma: Case series and review of the literature

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### ABSTRACT

Corona mortis is a variant vessel located posteriorly against the superior pubic ramus, “crowning” the pelvis; actual prevalence is unknown due to broad definitions: A connection between the obturator artery and an external iliac artery branch or the external iliac artery anastomosis, or any variant vessel behind the superior pubic ramus. Rapid identification and immediate treatment of injury to an arterial corona mortis resulting from pelvic trauma or pelvic surgeries are essential as hemorrhage or death may result. Interventional radiology can selectively target corona mortis and obstruct hemorrhage through catheter-guided embolization. We present four cases of corona mortis and pelvic trauma with successful embolization and include a comprehensive literature review to further educate regarding the morbidity and potential mortality associated with this important anatomic variant.

**Keywords:** Arterial corona mortis, Catheter embolization, Corona mortis, Variant pelvic vessel

### INTRODUCTION

Corona mortis, or “crown of death,” has been defined as a variant vessel that originates from the external iliac artery system and dives deep into the pelvis, crossing the superior pubic ramus, potentially creating an arterial or venous anastomosis with branches of the internal and external ipsilateral iliac vessels.<sup>[1]</sup> The connections between the obturator artery, typically an internal iliac artery branch, and an external iliac artery branch or the external iliac artery have prompted a more comprehensive definition of corona mortis that reflects the potential problem for surgeons in the retropubic region, and not simply describing the anatomy.<sup>[2]</sup> Thus, corona mortis can be defined as any vessel crossing the superior pubic ramus.<sup>[3]</sup>

Corona mortis is not typically taught during medical training, with most anatomy textbooks labeling corona mortis as “anomalous,” “aberrant,” or “accessory” despite published reports noting an arterial prevalence of 17–25% and a venous prevalence of 41.7–42%.<sup>[4,5]</sup> In addition, training often fails to emphasize the importance of identifying corona mortis, particularly given the location behind the pubic ramus that predisposes the vessel to injury in pelvic surgeries and trauma, a bleeding control challenge intraoperatively when a lacerated vessel spasms.<sup>[4]</sup> Injury to the arterial corona mortis is associated with severe adverse outcomes, resulting in rapid hemodynamic instability and death if left unrecognized.<sup>[6]</sup>

Catheter-guided embolization provides a minimally invasive alternative to rapidly achieve prompt hemostasis in cases of pelvic trauma, as it can selectively embolize a particular vessel

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without exposing the patient to surgical risk.<sup>[7]</sup> Following Institutional Review Board approval utilizing universal consent, we outline four reports of pelvic trauma resulting in hemorrhage due to the presence of arterial corona mortis and successful catheter-guided embolization.

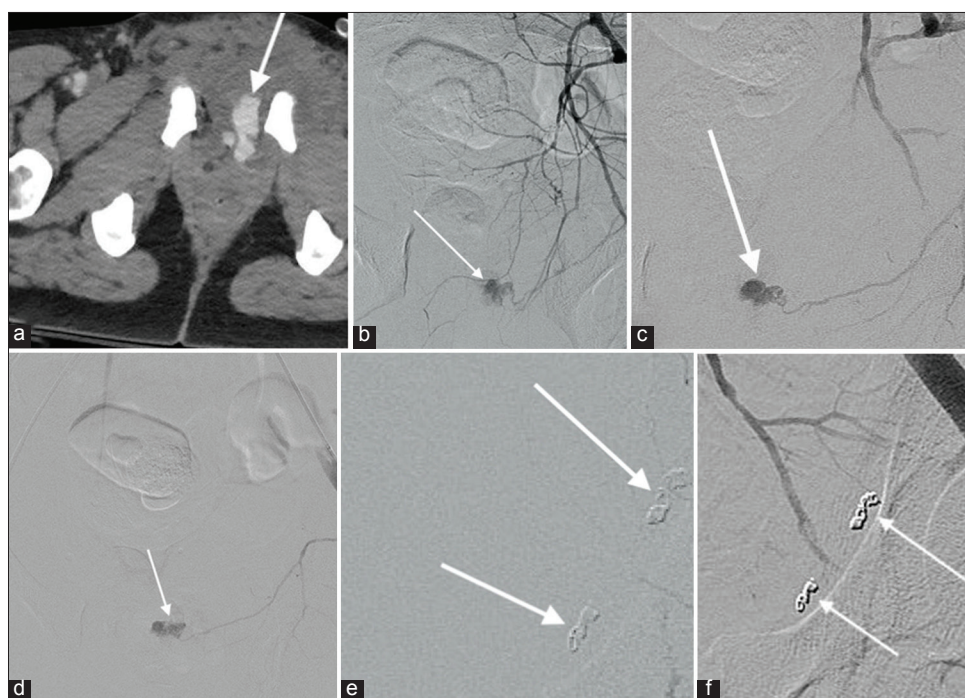
## CASE REPORTS

### Case 1

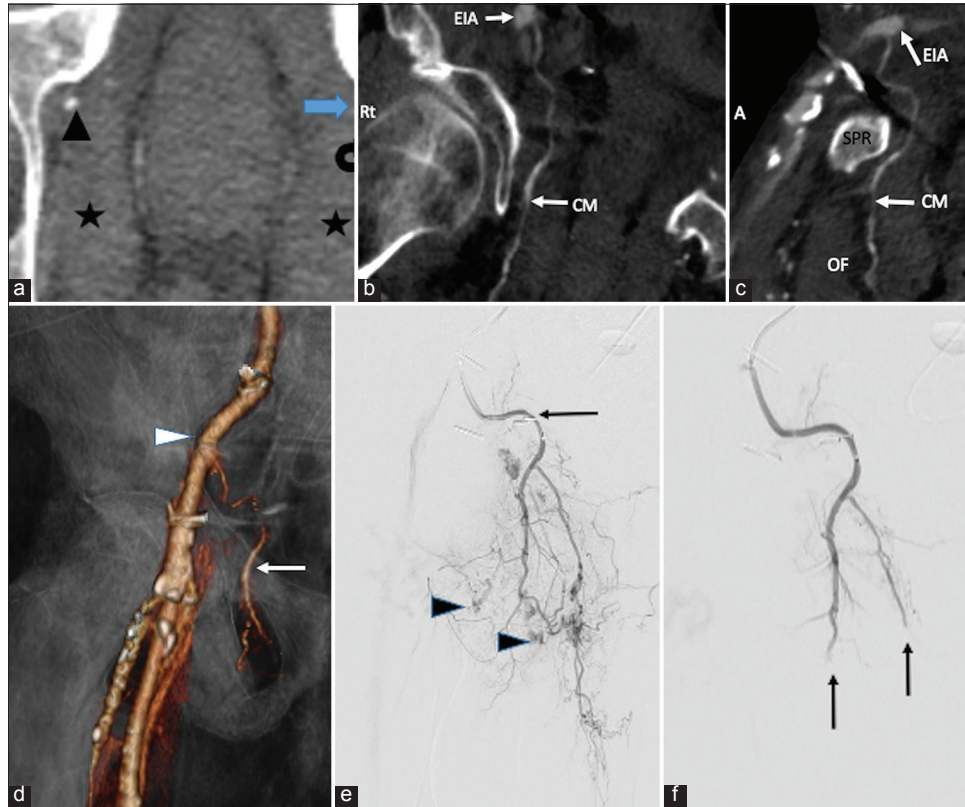
Following a motor vehicle collision, an 81-year-old male presented to the emergency department (ED). Contrast-



**Figure 1:** An 81-year-old male with bilateral fractures of the pubic rami (superior and inferior) and active contrast extravasation within the left gluteal musculature following a motor vehicle accident. (a) Contrast-enhanced coronal CT image of the pelvis demonstrating a small vessel arising from the left external iliac artery (white arrow). (b) Left external iliac angiogram confirming a corona mortis (white arrow) arising directly from the left external iliac artery separate from the inferior epigastric artery (black arrow). (c) Selective angiogram of corona mortis with a microcatheter showing multiple small foci of arterial contrast extravasation (white arrows). (d) Angiogram status post coil embolization (white arrow) of corona mortis with resultant hemostasis.



**Figure 2:** A 47-year-old male with an anterior-posterior compression III pelvic injury, sacroiliac joint widening, and active arterial contrast extravasation within the deep pelvis near the left pubic symphysis following a motorcycle accident. (a) Axial contrast-enhanced CT of the pelvis demonstrates active arterial extravasation of contrast (white arrow) anterior to a widened pubic symphysis. (b) Selective angiogram of the left internal iliac artery shows an active arterial bleed (white arrow) within the left deep pelvis due to reflux through the left external iliac artery. (c) Repeat right internal iliac artery angiogram after gelfoam embolization demonstrates bleeding (white arrow) arising from corona mortis arising from the right inferior epigastric artery (black arrow). (d) A 47-year-old male with an anterior-posterior compression III (APC) pelvic injury, sacroiliac joint widening, and active arterial contrast extravasation from the left internal iliac artery near the left pubic symphysis following a motorcycle accident. An angiogram of the left external iliac artery better demonstrates the bleed (white arrow) arising from corona mortis. (e) Post coil (white arrows) embolization of corona mortis showing no further hemorrhage. (f) Final angiogram of the right internal iliac artery demonstrating no further extravasation of contrast. Embolization coils are labeled with white arrows.

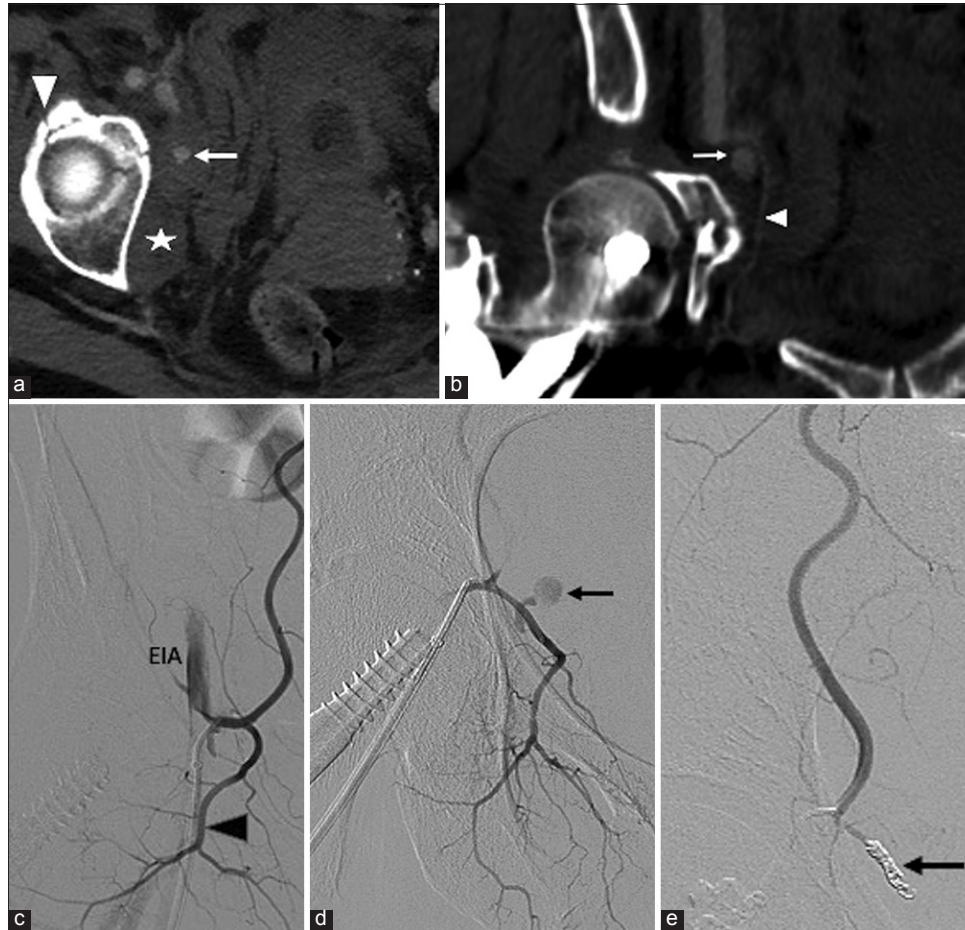


**Figure 3:** A 61-year-old male with multiple displaced pelvic fractures, bilateral pelvic hematomas, and multifocal blush on the right hemipelvis following a motor vehicle accident. (a) Right-sided corona mortis (arrowhead), the pubic branch of the inferior epigastric artery (blue arrow), obturator artery arising from the anterior division of the internal iliac artery (curved arrow), and lateral pelvic hematoma (star). (b) Oblique coronal and (c) oblique sagittal multiplanar reconstruction of the CTA images demonstrating the course of the right corona mortis (CM and arrow) originating from the external iliac artery (EIA and arrow), coursing behind the superior pubic ramus (SPR) and towards the obturator foramen (OF). (d) A volume-rendered CT pelvic angiogram shows the right obturator artery (arrow), that is, corona mortis arising from the right external iliac artery (arrowhead). (e) Selective angiogram through the right corona mortis (arrow) shows multiple areas of contrast extravasation in the region of the right obturator foramen (arrowheads). (f) Post-embolization images of the right corona mortis artery using gelfoam shows complete cessation of areas of extravasation (arrows).

enhanced computed tomography (CT) of the abdomen and pelvis revealed bilateral fractures of the pubic rami (superior and inferior); active contrast extravasation was present within the left gluteal musculature. A small abnormal branch of the left external iliac artery was noted [Figure 1a]. Emergent angiography was performed due to hypotension. The obturator artery was noted by angiogram to arise directly from the external iliac artery, extending into the deep pelvis, and creating corona mortis [Figure 1b]. Selective angiography of the obturator muscle bed further demonstrated active bleeding [Figure 1c]. Gelfoam (Pfizer, New York, NY) embolization was performed, followed by coil embolization (Concerto coils, Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN). Post-embolization angiogram confirmed hemostasis [Figure 1d]. Following fracture stabilization, the patient was discharged on hospital day 10.

## Case 2

A 47-year-old male was admitted to the ED with injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident. Intravenous contrast-enhanced CT demonstrated an anterior-posterior compression III pelvic injury demonstrating sacroiliac joint widening; the left pelvis demonstrated contrast extravasation [Figure 2a]. Active arterial contrast extravasation was also noted by angiography from the left internal iliac artery near the left pubic symphysis [Figure 2b]. Embolization of the left internal iliac artery anterior division utilizing Gelfoam slurry was performed. Follow-up angiogram demonstrated active arterial extravasation from a corona mortis [Figure 2c], a branch of the left inferior epigastric artery originating from the left internal iliac artery anterior division. Coil embolization (Concerto



**Figure 4:** A 64-year-old female with a right acetabular fracture with the right pelvic sidewall hematoma and a pseudoaneurysm lateral to an aberrant right obturator artery after falling at home. (a) Contrast-enhanced axial CT image shows a 6mm pseudoaneurysm (arrow) within the right lateral pelvic sidewall, pelvic hematoma (star), and right acetabular fracture (arrowhead). (b) Curved coronal reconstruction contrast-enhanced CT image demonstrating the aberrant right obturator artery arising from the external iliac artery representing the corona mortis (arrowhead). (c) The aberrant right obturator artery arising from the external iliac artery (EIA), represents the corona mortis (arrowhead). Note the common origin of the corona mortis and inferior epigastric artery (IEA). (d) Super-selective catheterization of the corona mortis showing the distribution of vasculature around the obturator foramen and the pelvic pseudoaneurysm (arrow). (e) DSA images post-coil embolization of the corona mortis (arrow). Concerto coils can be seen.

coils, Medtronic, Minneapolis MN) of the corona mortis was performed; a follow-up angiogram demonstrated no further hemorrhage [Figures 2d-f]. His pelvic fractures were internally fixated and he was discharged 15 days post-embolization.

### Case 3

A 61-year-old male presented to the ED with multiple pelvic fractures following a car accident. The patient presented as hemodynamically stable. Contrast-enhanced CT of the pelvis showed multiple displaced pelvic fractures, bilateral pelvic hematomas, and a right-sided corona mortis vessel [Figures 3a-c]. Angiography demonstrated multifocal blush on the right hemipelvis [Figure 3d]. The right corona mortis arising from the external iliac artery was readily identified, demonstrating active contrast extravasation on selective

angiogram [Figure 3e]. The variant artery was successfully embolized with Gelfoam [Figure 3f]. The patient was discharged post-procedure on day 5.

### Case 4

A 64-year-old female presented to the ED after falling at home. She was initially hemodynamically stable. Contrast-enhanced pelvic CT showed a right acetabular fracture with active extravasation and a pseudoaneurysm lateral to an aberrant right obturator artery [Figures 4a and 4b]; angiography was performed in the interventional radiology (IR) suite. Investigation of the right internal iliac artery demonstrated patency of the right internal iliac artery and branching vessels without evidence of active extravasation. An arteriogram of the right external iliac artery was

Table 1: Comprehensive literature review – Case series.

Study	Population	Type	Hemipelvises	Average age (range)	Gender	CMOR prevalence (%)	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm), (range)	Distance from lacunar ligament	Diameter (mm), (range)	Laterality
Teague, 1996 <sup>[9]</sup>	USA	Cadaveric	79	71 (56–88)	55% M	43 Arterial, 59 Venous	62 (30–90)		(2–4)	
Tornetta, 1996 <sup>[10]</sup>	USA	Cadaveric	50		84					
Missankov, 1996 <sup>[11]</sup>	South Africa	Cadaveric	98	45–80	71.4% F	69 Arterial, 46 Venous				USA arterial: Bilateral 20%, Unilateral 35%, Absent 45%
Gilroy, 1997 <sup>[12]</sup>	USA, China	Cadaveric	105		38 Arterial, 82 Venous (USA) 33 Arterial, 67 Venous (China)					China arterial: 17% Bilateral, 33% Unilateral, 50% Absent USA venous: Bilateral 75%, Unilateral 15%, Absent 10%
De Kleuver, 1998 <sup>[13]</sup>	Netherlands	Cadaveric	12		74.5% M	50				China venous: 50% Bilateral, 33% Unilateral 17% Absent
Beretroglu, 2001 <sup>[14]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	14		86 Arterial, 100 Venous	40.4 (33.2–52.7) Arterial or Venous		0.98 (0.6–1.2) Arterial, 3.3 (2.2–4.9) Venous		
Sarikcioglu, 2003 <sup>[8]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	54		92.5% M	0 Arterial, 20.37 Venous	39.79 (28.37–51.21) Arterial or Venous	12.18 (8.63–15.73) Arterial or Venous		
Okcu et al., 2004 <sup>[1]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	150	40 (16–78)	77.3% M	19 Arterial, 52 Venous, 9 Mixed	64 (45–90) Arterial, 56 (37–80) Venous			28% Bilateral
Ersoy, 2004 <sup>[15]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	10	61.4 (52–71)	100% F	100 Venous				
Drewes, 2005	USA	Cadaveric	30	77 (46–95)	100% F	33 Arterial, 60 Venous	54			12% Bil arterial 33% Bil venous
Pungpapong, 2005 <sup>[7]</sup>	Thailand	Cadaveric	66		54.5% F	13.6 Arterial, 77.3 Venous	52.8			
Darmanis et al., 2007 <sup>[2]</sup>	UK	Cadaveric	80		67.5% M	36 Arterial, 60 Venous, 27.5 Mixed	71 (42–88) Arterial, 65 (39–82) Venous	14 (11–16)	2.6 (1.6–3.5)	
Namking, 2007 <sup>[18]</sup>	Thailand	Cadaveric	204	20–95	54.4% M	22.5 Arterial, 70.6 Venous, 17.2 Mixed				Arterial: Right 20.8%, Left 24.3% Venous: Right 70.3%, Left 70.9% Mixed: Right 14.9%, Left 19.4%
Pathi, 2009 <sup>[19]</sup>	USA	Cadaveric	24	79 (65–96)	100% F	25 Arterial, 67 Venous				
Mahato, 2009 <sup>[20]</sup>	India	Cadaveric	50	40–60	88% M	40 Venous, 22 Mixed				Venous: Right 36%, Left 43% Mixed: Right 23%, Left 21%
Rusu et al., 2010 <sup>[3]</sup>	Romania	Cadaveric	40		60% M	25 Arterial, 15 Venous, 40 Mixed				
Kacra, 2011 <sup>[21]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	10		20 Venous, 20 Mixed					
Stavropoulou -Deli, 2013 <sup>[22]</sup>	Greece	Cadaveric	70		100% F	11.43 Arterial, 14.29 Venous	52.4 (40–75) Arterial, 46.7 (35–55) Venous		3 Arterial, 3.1 Venous	Arterial: 37.5% Right, 12.5% Left, 50% Bilateral Venous: 20% Left, 80% Bilateral

(Contd....)

Table 1: (Continued).

Study	Population	Type	Hemipelvises	Average age (range)	Gender	CMOR prevalence (%)	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm), (range)	Diameter (mm), (range)	Laterality
Bible, 2014 <sup>[23]</sup>	USA	Cadaveric	10			60 Arterial, 80 Venous			
Nayak, 2016 <sup>[24]</sup>	S India	Cadaveric	73	50-80	94.5% M	51 Venous			Arterial: Right 27.27%, Left 18.18%
Tajira, 2016 <sup>[25]</sup>	Brazil	Cadaveric	24		66.7% M	22.72 Arterial			20.8% Bilateral
Al Talawah, 2016 <sup>[26]</sup>	Austria	Cadaveric	208		73% M	12 Arterial	54.5 (38-79)		
Pillay, 2017 <sup>[27]</sup>	India	Cadaveric	67		63% M	12.5 Arterial, 60.7 Venous, 26.78 Mixed	49.62	2.66	
Leite, 2017 <sup>[28]</sup>	Brazil	Cadaveric	60		83.3% M	45 Arterial	65.30		
Zhou, 2017 <sup>[29]</sup>	China	Cadaveric	20	38.3 (21-60)	65.8% M	15% Arterial, 55% Venous			
Kashyap, 2019 <sup>[30]</sup>	N India	Cadaveric	24	68 (54-82)	91.7% M	8.3 Arterial, 58.3 Venous, 8.3 Mixed	41 (35-70)	83% were <4 mm	20.8% Right, 37.5% Left, 41.7% Bilateral
Cardeiro, 2019 <sup>[31]</sup>	Brazil	Cadaveric	80		67.5% M	22.5 Arterial			
Dias, 2019 <sup>[32]</sup>	India	Cadaveric	50	44.8	88% M	4 Arterial, 40 Venous			
Du, 2020 <sup>[33]</sup>	China	Cadaveric	16		62.5% M	18.75 Arterial, 43.75 Venous, 12.5 Mixed	59.0 (53.9-65.2)	2.5 (1.6-3.5)	
Kati, 2021 <sup>[34]</sup>	Turkey	Cadaveric	12	70.8 (59-80)	66.7% M	83 Arterial or Venous	47.7 (43-55)		
Wada, 2021 <sup>[35]</sup>	Japan	Cadaveric	122	85 (65-106)	52.5% F	28.3 Arterial, 76.1 Venous	Anteroposterior view: 47.7 (45.9-49.6), Inlet view: 59.4 (57.3-61.5)		
Karakurt, 2002 <sup>[36]</sup>	Turkey	Angiography (prospective)	98	55 (23-73)	60.2% M	28.5 Arterial	33.4 (21.4-41)		
Smith, 2009 <sup>[37]</sup>	USA	CT (prospective)	100	26 (18-87)	54% F	29 Arterial	56 (41-72)	2.5 mm (1.6-3.5)	Arterial: 28% Left, 30% Right, 22% Bilateral
Requarth and Miller, 2011 <sup>[38]</sup>	USA	Angiography (Retrospective)	243		50.6% F	Arterial 38.4% of all hemipelvises, 55.1% in all pts			Arterial: 37.7% Right, 39.1% Left 21.7% Bilateral
Castellani, 2016 <sup>[39]</sup>	Italy	CT (Prospective)	94		100% F	27.7			69% Bilateral
Wada, 2017 <sup>[30]</sup>	Japan	CTA (Retrospective)	196	66 (54-78)	63.3% M	14.3 Arterial			
Han, 2017 <sup>[2]</sup>	China	CTA (Prospective)	660	43 (11-72)	100% F	14.1% Arterial, 51.1% Venous	59.6 (43-82)	2.56 Arterial, 3.63 Venous	Arterial: 6.06% Bilateral, venous: 34.24% Bilateral
Steinberg, 2017 <sup>[42]</sup>	Israel	CTA (Retrospective)	200	67 (19-96)	66% M	33 Arterial	66.87 (41-119)	Right: 2.4 (1.4-3.7), Left: 2.24 (1.6-3.5)	Arterial: 45.5% Left, 54.5% Right, 45.5% Bilateral
Duenas-Garcia, 2018 <sup>[43]</sup>	USA	3D-Imaging from CTA	87	66.9	100% F	27.9 Arterial	51.3 (37-59)	Right, 52.7 (36-58)	Left

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Table 1: (Continued).

Study	Population	Type	Hemipelvises	Average age (range)	Gender	CMOR prevalence (%)	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm), (range)	Distance from lacunar ligament	Diameter (mm), (range)	Laterality
Perandini, 2018 <sup>[44]</sup>	Italy	CTA (Retrospective)	300	73 (22-95)	74% M	30 Arterial	50 (42-72)		1.7 (0.8-3.2)	Arterial: 45.4% Left, 55.6% Right, 35.6% Unilateral 64.6% bilateral Arterial: 56% Right, 44% Left, 52% Bilateral 20% Unilateral 4% Bilateral
Zlotorowicz, 2018 <sup>[45]</sup>	Poland	CTA	100	46.7 (14-80)	72% F	33 Arterial				
Bhoil, 2020 <sup>[46]</sup>	India	CTA (Prospective)	200	40 (22-74)	67% M	14 Arterial	54.55 (Range 42-68) Right, 54.26 (Range 40-66) Left		Right: 2.6 (1.7-3.0), Left: 2.3 (1.6-3.2)	
Teague, 1996 <sup>[9]</sup>	USA	Intraoperative (Prospective)	38	31 (13-67)	78.9% M	37				
Bereroglu, 2001 <sup>[14]</sup>	Turkey	Intraoperative	36			86 Arterial, 94 Venous				
Lau, 2003 <sup>[47]</sup>	Hong Kong, China	Intraoperative (Prospective)	141	64 (49-79)	96.7% M	22 Arterial, 27 Venous				
Darmanis et al., 2007 <sup>[2]</sup>	UK	Intraoperative (Retrospective)	492	34 (7-80)	71.5% M	0.01 Arterial Or Venous				
Pellegrino, 2014 <sup>[48]</sup>	Italy	Intraoperative	50	59 (46-68)	100% F	8 Arterial, 48 Venous, 23 Mixed				Arterial: 41.9% Left, 58.1% Right Venous: 52.6% Left, 47.4% Right
Jensen, 2015 <sup>[49]</sup>	Switzerland	Intraoperative (Retrospective)	130	51 (38-70)	66.2% M	41.5				Right 60%, Left 28%, Bilateral 12%
Ates, 2016 <sup>[50]</sup>	Turkey	Intraoperative (Retrospective)	391	46 (37.4-54.6)	83.5% M	28.4 Arterial			22.8% <2 mm, 5.5% >2 mm	
Kinaci, 2016 <sup>[51]</sup>	Turkey	Intraoperative	475	46 (36.9-55.1)	84% M	31.3 Arterial, 5.8 Venous			25.05% <2 mm, 6.32% >2 mm	
Guzel, 2020 <sup>[52]</sup>	Turkey	Intraoperative	34	43.5 (21-65)	77.4% M	23 Arterial, 45 Venous, 26 Mixed	35.9 (21.6-48.7)			

Greyed boxes indicate variables that the study did not address. CTA: Computed tomography angiography; Table 1 references detailed in the Supplemental material.

Table 2: Comprehensive literature review – Individual cases.

Case	Imaging	Age/Gender	Hemodynamics	Clinical Situation	Transfusion Requirement	Laterality	Type	Rusu classification	Tx	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm)	Diameter (mm)
Meyers, 2000 <sup>[53]</sup>	Angiography	86/F 43/M	Initially stable, rapid decompensation while in ED (BP 70/40, HR 100s) BP 109/80, HR 126	Pubic rami fractures s/p 4-ft fall Pubic rami fractures s/p 20-ft fall	7 U blood 10 U blood	Left Right	Pubic branch of the inferior epigastric artery		Embolization		
Daeubler, 2003 <sup>[54]</sup>	CT with contrast/ Angiography	46/M	Initial BP was 133/107. Decompensated while in CT with BP of 100/65, pulse of 120 bpm.	Superior and inferior pubic ramus fracture secondary to car versus cyclist in which the pt was the cyclist.	6 U whole blood, 8 U PRBCs, 2 U FFP	Left	Obturator artery originating from inferior epigastric artery	I2	Embolization with microparticles and 0.018 in coils		
Macdonald, 2006 <sup>[55]</sup>	Angiography	71/F	Initially stable, developed hypotension and tachycardia after admission. Hemoglobin decreased from 13.2 to 6.3 g/dL	Superior ramus fracture s/p fall	10 U PRBCs, 3 U FFP	Left	Pubic branch of left inferior epigastric artery		Embolization with coils		
Henning, 2007 <sup>[56]</sup>	CT with contrast/ Angiography	81/F	Became hemodynamically unstable during overnight stay with hemoglobin decreasing from 13.3 to 8.1 g/dL and BP of 92/54.	Superior and inferior left pubic ramus fracture after fall.	7 U PRBC, 4 U FFP	Left	Distal branch of inferior epigastric artery		Embolization with microparticles and 2 mm in coils		
Smith, 2009 <sup>[57]</sup>	CT with contrast/ Angiography	19/M	Stable on arrival but patient became tachycardic in CT scanner and interval hemoglobin showed decrease from 13.1 to 11.3 g/dL. Post procedural hemoglobin was 9 g/dL.	Fractures of left superior pubic ramus, left ischiopubic ramus, and first sacral segment after high speed MVA.	4 U of PRBCs	Left	Obturator artery originating from inferior epigastric artery	I2	Embolized with alcohol particles and and gelgoam slurry		
Larsson, 2010 <sup>[58]</sup>	Intraoperative	53/F	Stable, however, hemoglobin decreased from 13.0 to 12.2 g/dL postoperatively	Intraabdominal bleeding postop TVT-Secur procedure		Left			Surgical ligation		
Rehder, 2010 <sup>[59]</sup>	CT	46/F	Stable	Retropubic hematoma following invasive MUS for stress urinary incontinence		Left	Anastomoses between obturator and inferior epigastric artery	I3	Conservative management		
Dixon, 2011 <sup>[60]</sup>	CTA	70/F	Stable	Type II endoleak found on 10-year follow up s/p open surgical aortobiliac graft placement for isolated internal iliac artery aneurysm		Right	Anastomoses between obturator and inferior epigastric artery	I3	Embolization with three 6 mm Tornado coils, 4mL of thrombin, and Glubran 2		
Ferrada, 2011 <sup>[1]</sup>	CT with contrast/ Angiography	72/M	Initially stable with BP of 172/83 but later decompensated to systolic of 100 s	Fractures to bilateral inferior pelvic rami after MVC		Bilateral	Obturator arteries arising from inferior epigastric arteries bilaterally	I2	Embolization		

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Table 2: (Continued)..

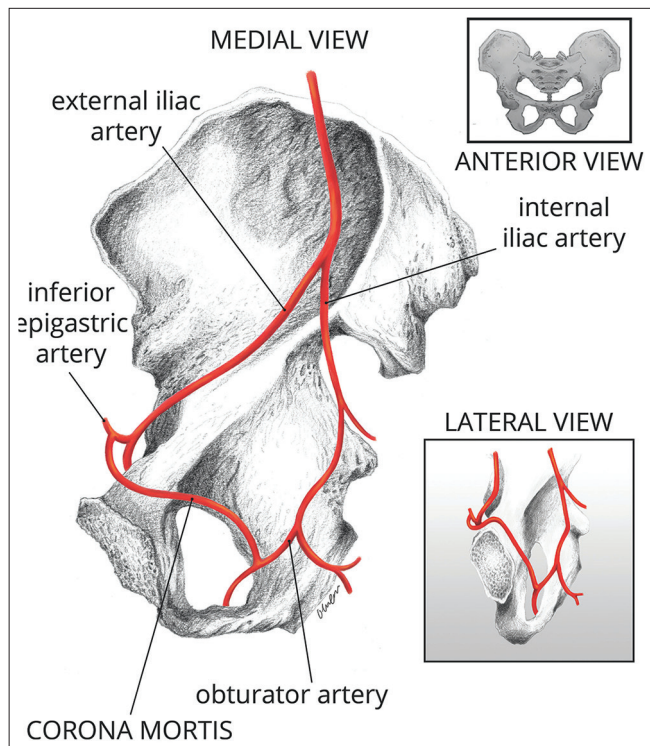
Case	Imaging	Age/Gender	Hemodynamics	Clinical Situation	Transfusion Requirement	Laterality	Type	Rusu classification	Tx	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm)	Diameter (mm)
Theodorides et al., 2011 <sup>[6]</sup>	Angiography	78/F	Initially stable, became unstable within 2 h	Superior pubic ramus fracture s/p fall	8 U blood, 4 U FFP	Right			Embolization with gelfoam		
Garrido-Gómez, 2012 <sup>[62]</sup>	Angiography	70/F	Initially stable and discharged home. Returned 72 h later with BP 95/64, HR 140	Iliopubic rami fracture and a nondisplaced right ischiopubic rami fracture s/p fall	6 U	Left	distal portion of a small branch of the obturator artery		Embolization		
Kong and Tsai, 2012 <sup>[63]</sup>	CT with contrast/	58/F	Initially stable, became hypotensive (77/48) within 2 h	Simple pubic ramus fracture s/p MVC	4 U PRBCs, 4 U FFP	Right	Pubic branch of right inferior epigastric artery		Embolization		
Pua, 2012 <sup>[64]</sup>	Angiography CT/ Angiography	55/M		Right superior and inferior pubic rami fracture and diastasis of the right SI joint s/p MVC		Bilateral	Bilateral obturator arteries arising from CM as a branch distal to the right inferior epigastric	12	Embolization with gelatin sponge slurry and coil		
Ten Broek, 2014 <sup>[65]</sup>	Angiography	79/F	Initially stable, became hypotensive (82/43) the following day Hemoglobin 5.5 mmol/L	Superior pubic rami fracture s/p fall	2 U PRBCs	Right	Branch of internal iliac artery communicating with inferior epigastric artery	Likely 13	Embolization		
Ramser, 2014 <sup>[66]</sup>	Intraoperative	97/F	Stable	Incidental finding during laparoscopic obturator hernia repair		Right			None required		
Kandhari, 2015 <sup>[67]</sup>	CTA	40/F	Stable	Patent CMOR preserved blood flow to lower extremity of a patient with blocked external iliac artery after failed fixation of fractured acetabulum causing avascular necrosis of the hip		Left	Anastomosis between obturator and external iliac artery		None		
Cerda, 2016 <sup>[68]</sup>	Cadaver	M		Incidental finding during routine dissection		Bilateral	Obturator artery originating from inferior epigastric artery	Likely 12		Left: 47.24, Right: 49.23	Left: 2.77, Right: 2.8
Pinochet, 2016 <sup>[69]</sup>	Cadaveric	81/F		Cadaveric study		Bilateral	Left: obturator vein draining into inferior epigastric vein, Right: External iliac vein into the obturator canal	Left: Type II2, Right: unclassified		65 Left, 67 Right	8 Left, 3 Right

(Contd....)

Table 2: (Continued)..

Case	Imaging	Age/Gender	Hemodynamics	Clinical Situation	Transfusion Requirement	Laterality	Type	Rusu classification	Tx	Distance from pubic symphysis (mm)	Diameter (mm)
Xu, 2018 <sup>[70]</sup>	CT with contrast/Angiography	88/M	When transferred from outside hospital, pt became diaphoretic, tachycardic and hypotensive with BP of 81/56.	Superior pubic ramus fracture following a fall.	16 U PRBCs, 3.5 L FFP	Right	Distal branch of right external iliac artery		Embolization with balloon-assisted coiling		
Babinski, 2018 <sup>[71]</sup>	Cadaveric	M		Incidental finding during dissection		Right	Venous and arterial anastomoses between inferior epigastric and obturator vessels	I3 and II3			3 mm
Yasuda, 2018 <sup>[72]</sup>	Intraoperative	66/M	On POD 1, BP 79/54 and hemoglobin decreased from 14.7 to 12.7 g/dL. POD 2, BP was 9.6 g/dL.	Corona mortis vein was injured by the tip of the electric cauterium during transabdominal preperitoneal laparoscopic hernioplasty.	Unknown amount	Left	Vein across Cooper's ligament		Exploratory laparoscopy with evacuation of hematoma and application of surgical clips		
Herskowitz, 2019 <sup>[73]</sup>	CTA/Angiography	50/M	Initial BP 91/58, hemoglobin decreased from 13.2 to 7.3 g/dL on repeat labs.	Pelvic fracture (diastasis of the symphysis pubis, avulsion fracture of the medial aspect of the left superior pubic ramus, separation of the left sacroiliac joint) secondary to MVA.	6 U PRBC, 5 U FFP, 1 pack platelets	Bilateral	Right: branch off of inferior epigastric artery, Left: aberrant pubic branch off external iliac artery	Right: I2, Left: unclassified	Embolization with 0.018 coils and gelfoam slurry		
Han, 2020 <sup>[74]</sup>	CT with contrast/Angiography	71/M	Stable but was readmitted with episodes of near-syncope, abdominal distension and anemia on POD 6	CMOR pseudoaneurysm in causing delayed intermittent hemoperitoneum after robotic radical prostatectomy		Left	Branch of external iliac artery which gave origin to inferior epigastric artery, pseudoaneurysm cavity, and obturator artery.		Embolization		
Pisanno, 2021 <sup>[75]</sup>	CT with contrast	60/M		CMOR pseudoaneurysm 12 weeks after RALP		Left	Branch of external iliac artery which gave origin to inferior epigastric artery, pseudoaneurysm cavity, and obturator artery.		Embolization		

Greyed boxes indicate variables that the study did not address. POD: Post-operative day. CTA: Computed tomography angiography, RALP: Robot-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy, U: Units, ED: Emergency Department; BP: Blood Pressure; HR: Heart Rate; PRBC: Packed Red Blood Cells; FFP: Fresh Frozen Plasma; MVA: Motor Vehicle Accident; MCV: Motor Vehicle Collision; TVT: Tension Free Vaginal Tape; MUS: Musculoskeletal Ultrasound; SI: sacroiliac; s/p: status-post; CMOR: Corona Mortis; CMI: Corona Mortis; Tx: Therapy. Supplementary Table 1 references in Supplementary Material.



**Figure 5:** Illustration. An illustration representing the two variants of corona mortis noted in our case series. In two of the four cases, the corona mortis was found as a branch off of the external iliac artery (Rusu type I.1). In two cases the corona mortis was identified as a branch of the inferior epigastric artery, which communicated with the anterior division of the internal iliac artery (similar to Rusu type I.2).

performed, revealing a slight blush of contrast from an aberrant right obturator artery. This artery originated from the mid-right external iliac artery and shared a common trunk with the inferior epigastric artery [Figure 4c]. It then traveled over the superior pubic ramus before entering the obturator foramen, forming a corona mortis [Figure 4d]. Embolization of the corona mortis was then performed using Concerto detachable coils (Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN) with no further evidence of active bleeding or pseudoaneurysm [Figure 4e]. The patient was discharged on post-procedure day 7.

## DISCUSSION

Management of pelvic trauma typically includes placement of a pelvic binder, with CT on the vast majority of patients and FAST for unstable patients. Patients positive for FAST are treated surgically with pre-peritoneal packing; if FAST is negative, IR is typically consulted for angioembolization. Corona mortis is defined as an “anastomosis between the

obturator and the external iliac or inferior epigastric artery or vein” and any other vessels, posing a risk of hemorrhage to surgeons operating in the space posterior to the superior pubic ramus.<sup>[2,3,8]</sup> Corona mortis is classified by the Rusu *et al.* system into three main categories (I. Arterial, II. Venous, III. combined), with further classification into subcategories based on morphological patterns.<sup>[3]</sup> In our series, Cases 1 and 4 could be classified as the most common form, Rusu *et al.* type I.1 variant, while Cases 2 and 4 could be classified as Rusu *et al.* type I.2.

Various definitions have resulted in discrepancies in the documented prevalence of corona mortis. A comprehensive literature search identified corona mortis cases from cadaveric, intraoperative, radiologic, and individual case studies [Table 1<sup>[1-3,8-52]</sup> and 2<sup>[6,53-75]</sup> Figure 5]. Arterial corona mortis in cadaveric and intraoperative studies reported the widest range, with averages of 30.13% and 35.14%, respectively, possibly related to intraoperative spasm of a lacerated corona mortis, making definitive identification of corona mortis challenging.<sup>[8]</sup> Radiologic studies reported a lower prevalence, with a mean of 26.2%. Interestingly, two separate meta-analyses reported arterial corona mortis prevalence as 17% and 25%, respectively, which is much lower than our evaluation of the literature (8.3–86%; [Tables 1 and 2]) Venous corona mortis prevalence was reported to be higher than arterial corona mortis, at approximately 50% overall.<sup>[4,5]</sup> Arterial corona mortis poses the greatest risk for surgeons and interventionalists in the setting of pelvic trauma, suggesting that corona mortis is not uncommon, and thorough mapping of the vasculature is essential.

An isolated pubic ramus fracture can often be treated with conservative management; however, in cases involving a corona mortis, patients are at risk of delayed hemorrhage.<sup>[63]</sup> These vessels are deep within the pelvis and are often challenging to identify during surgery due to spasm.<sup>[8]</sup> It is not surprising that, of the traumas that documented fracture of the pubic rami ( $n = 13$ ) and of 12 traumas that mentioned hemodynamic status, all of the patients exhibited delayed hemorrhage [Table 2]. Interestingly, of the four patients in which corona mortis was identified intraoperatively, 50% were hemodynamically stable, and 50% had delayed hemorrhage. The three corona mortis identified post-operatively ( $n = 3$ ) had only one (33%) with delayed hemorrhage, suggesting more success in corona management during non-trauma operative procedures. Awareness and early recognition of the corona mortis variant by radiologists in cases of trauma are vital.

The sensitivity and specificity of CT angiography (CTA) in identifying corona mortis in non-pelvic fracture patients are 90% and 100%, respectively. This vessel could be missed on initial CT without angiography as the sensitivity and

specificity decrease to 63.6% and 92.3% in the setting of pelvic fracture.<sup>[38]</sup> However, an evaluation of the case reports [Table 2] indicated that all trauma cases utilized CTA successfully to identify corona mortis. More importantly, all of the cases were successfully managed using embolization.

## CONCLUSION

In the setting of pelvic fracture, it is essential to identify corona mortis as an injury may result in a life-threatening hemorrhage due to its position over the superior pubic ramus. Thus, careful radiological evaluation of corona mortis is key to preventing delayed life-threatening hemorrhage, as this entity is more common than previously thought. The interventionist needs to focus on the external iliac artery during catheter angiography in all cases of pelvic trauma, as the data suggest that the obturator artery may arise from that location in greater than 25% of cases.

In the setting of pelvic injury or pelvic surgery, catheter-guided embolization provides quick and successful management of hemorrhage.<sup>[7]</sup>

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## Declaration of patient consent

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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