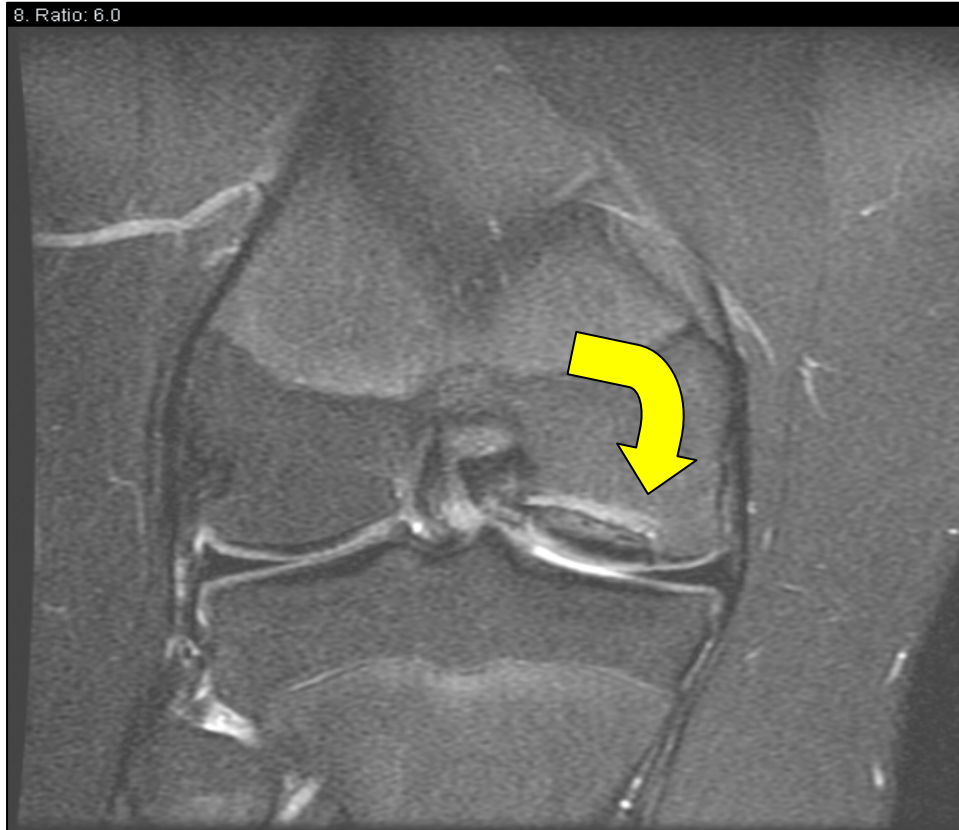


Weekly Radiograph Review: December 2, 2008
MRI Osteochondritis Dessicans

Erin S. Hart, NP



Findings: MRI shows a very large Grade III OCD defect (Osteochondritis Dessicans) in the medial femoral condyle (large arrow). There is moderate surrounding edema and the lesion appears partially detached. The menisci and ligaments appear to be intact.

Contact between the end of the femur (thigh bone) and the top of the tibia (shin bone) occurs at the knee joint. The surfaces of these bones in the joint have protective covers made up of articular cartilage. This cartilage optimizes weight distribution over the joint surface, minimizes friction and wear, and allows for a smooth glide over the joint surface with motion. Beneath this protective cover lies subchondral bone followed by cancellous bone.

People with osteochondritis dessicans (OCD) have a disease process in which there is a localized osteocartilaginous separation at the level of the subchondral bone that can damage this protective cover producing pain and swelling. Unless the lesion repairs spontaneously or it is treated, the disease process will usually progress. The area of subchondral bone with its attached articular cartilage can become loose and fall into the joint. In fact, this is the most common source of loose bodies in the knee joint. OCD lesions may occur in any joint, but they most often occur in the knee.

