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Odontoid fractures in elderly population

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Odontoid fracture treatment is well documented, but challenges remain in treating these fractures in elderly patients. Issues include identifying the optimal treatment for bony union, determining the stability of a nonunion, and understanding the long-term consequences of nonunion. In elderly patients, the focus tends to shift to morbidity and mortality. In elderly patients with odontoid fractures, one should be prepared for a hospital course complicated by

medical issues; early mortality rates are significant. These issues appear to exist regardless of the fracture treatment chosen; one must anticipate respiratory, swallowing, balance, and cardiac problems. Management strategies should be individualized to the patients; operative and nonoperative treatments remain viable options.

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