Sleeve Fracture of the Patella in Children
*Patella fracture with a “sleeve” of cartilage*

- This is akin to a patella tendon injury, with disruption of the extensor mechanism and a large cartilage fragment avulsed from the patella.

- There may be a small bony component to the fragment, but its absence or small size can lead to the injury being missed.

- Affects boys more frequently than girls, in the age group 8-16.

- Commonly occurs in athletics or jumping scenarios, with the leading leg or take-off leg being affected *without* any direct trauma or impact.

- Hallmark signs:
  - Tense haemarthrosis
  - Inability to straight leg raise
  - Patella alta
  - Palpable gap in patella tendon

- Undisplaced fragments can be managed non-operatively in a cylinder cast, but any displacement is a pre-requisite for internal fixation (usually a tension band wire) with early mobilisation.

*Houghton 1979, JBJS 61-B (2); 165-8
Gao 2008, JOS 16 (1); 43-46*