Abstract

This study attempts to reconcile the apparent differences in the reported frequency of ankylosing spondylitis and radiological sacroiliitis in HLA-B27 positive individuals. Pelvic radiographs from 125 Busselton subjects were mixed with 81 other films selected to illustrate the possible range of sacroiliac changes and were graded by observers who were involved in 2 of the conflicting studies and by a 3rd independent observer. Concordance was high for advanced bilateral disease but not for unilateral and milder changes. Variation between observers and the interpretation of sacroiliac radiographs is sufficiently large to account for much of the disagreement between frequency estimates.