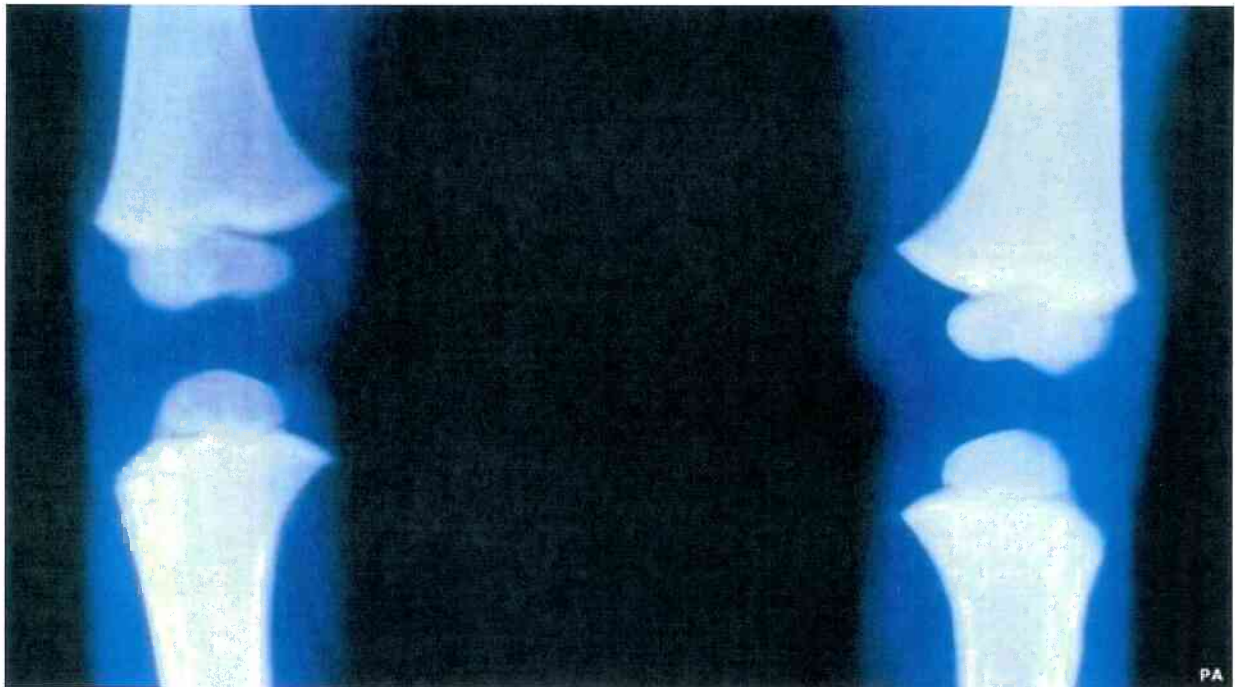


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Cumbria baby boy's injuries caused by rickets not violence

16 July 2015 [Cumbria](#)



Rickets results in weakened bones in children and adults

A couple have been cleared of causing injuries to a five-month-old baby who suffered a fractured skull and other broken bones.

Despite a history of domestic violence at the couple's home, a judge said the boy probably had rickets and was injured falling from a sofa last year.

Cumbria County Council asked a family court hearing in Barrow to rule the boy's injuries had been "inflicted".

But Judge Peter Jackson said social workers had failed to prove their case.

Medics told Mr Justice Jackson that rickets - which is caused by a vitamin D deficiency and makes bones weak - might have made the boy "susceptible to fractures".

He said social services bosses had asked him to rule the injuries had been caused by the baby's mother or her partner, but he concluded the authority had not "proved its case" after analysing evidence from medical experts.

'Exceptional case'

Judge Jackson said the boy had been taken to hospital with a fractured skull, broken ribs and a broken wrist.

He said there was no evidence the baby's mother or her partner had a "propensity for serious violence" to children, adding the injuries were not "particularly suggestive of inflicted injury".

"This is an exceptional case," said the judge. "In a child with a normal metabolism the almost inevitable conclusion would be that these fractures would be likely to be the result of violence.

"However, the fact that the baby was probably suffering from rickets means that conclusions that might have been drawn in a normal case would be unreliable and unsafe in this case."

The judge said the council was right to seek a judicial ruling on the case as it has responsibility for the child's welfare.

The family involved was not identified.

Earlier this year, health chiefs raised concerns about the return of rickets, a disease common during Victorian times but now virtually eradicated.

Correction 17 July: An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated the child died from his injuries.