Brittle or battered?

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to correspondence about this subject. There is reference to an article in which I reported study of a series of children with osteogenesis imperfecta with special reference to the occurrence of metaphyseal fractures.1

In his letter Dr Blumenthal states that 'metaphyseal fractures are a feature of both abuse and brittle bones'.2 This is true but needs qualification. In non-accidental injury the bones appear grossly normal and the metaphyseal fractures are often numerous. In osteogenesis imperfecta fractures of this type are infrequent and rarely number more than one or two. They were only seen in my series where there was gross abnormality of the skeleton and the diagnosis of the presence of a systemic bone disease was apparent at a glance.

To quote my last sentence, 'Confusion with non-accidental injury did not occur'.

References