To the Editor—We read with interest the comments on our paper “Typhoid osteomyelitis of the spine is not ‘extremely rare’” in the Hong Kong Medical Journal’s February 2007 issue. We would like to emphasise that Salmonella osteomyelitis can be divided into two broad categories: typhoid osteomyelitis (caused by Salmonella typhi and paratyphi) and non-typhoid osteomyelitis, which differ epidemiologically. The writer said typhoid osteomyelitis is not extremely rare, supporting this with several references, but all the cases mentioned in these references were of non-typhoid osteomyelitis.

The writer also claimed that vertebral typhoid osteomyelitis is common in immunocompromised patients citing Santos and Sapico to support this. In the section on underlying causes in this paper, there was no mention of whether Salmonella typhi was involved or not. We were surprised that the writer came to the conclusion that it was a case of typhoidal osteomyelitis. Hence, we think there has been a misunderstanding about osteomyelitis caused by typhoid and non-typhoid salmonellas.

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References