The “zipline” technique for endoscopic transpapillary biliary biopsy

Endoscopic transpapillary biopsy has been the cornerstone of tissue acquisition from the biliary epithelium [1, 2]. However, targeting biliary lesions using standard biopsy forceps is occasionally difficult [3], and wire-guided biopsy forceps are not commonly available. Herein, we present a technique for biliary biopsy with a simple modification of a widely used biopsy forceps.

A 67-year-old man was admitted with obstructive jaundice. In the first session of endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), a nasobiliary catheter was placed, and carcinoma of the mid bile duct was pathologically confirmed (▶ Fig. 1). Given that there was no evidence of metastasis on imaging studies, a second session was conducted to assess lateral tumor spread and determine the required extent of surgical resection. After biliary cannulation, a 0.035-inch guidewire (Jagwire; Boston Scientific, Natick, Massachusetts, USA) was passed to the bile duct at segment II (B2). A biopsy forceps with 2-mm-wide cups (Radial Jaw 4 pediatric; Boston Scientific) was used to acquire tissue specimens at the left hepatic duct and the communication of the hepatic ducts. However, the dilated left hepatic duct inhibited the forceps being advanced into the right lobe. Therefore, we added a looped nylon thread to one cup of the forceps (▶ Fig. 2) and inserted the forceps with the loop over a guidewire placed in B8 (▶ Fig. 3). The forceps was successfully passed to B8, and targeted biopsy was achieved from the right hepatic duct. Based on positive histology in this biopsy of the right hepatic duct, hepatopancreato-duodenectomy was scheduled.

The Radial Jaw series has been among the most widely used biopsy forceps, with the forceps having hole(s) in each cup, through which a looped thread can readily be passed. Despite the reported effectiveness of cholangioscopy-guided biliary biopsy [4], this modality is limited by high costs and the unavailability of large biopsy forceps. The “zipline” technique presented here would facilitate biliary biopsies during ERCP at minimal additional costs (▶ Video 1).

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Competing interests

None
Video 1 The “zipline” technique that facilitates biliary biopsies during endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography.

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