Rectal tonsil: a rare cause of rectal bleeding

A rectal tonsil is a lymphoid follicular hyperplasia of the rectum and a rare cause of rectal bleeding. As it is a benign lesion of uncertain etiology [1,2], treatment is reserved for symptomatic patients [2].

We present the case of a 21-year-old woman with normal bowel movements who presented with a history of rectal bleeding over a period of 4 months. Digital rectal examination revealed a rectal mass. Colonoscopy revealed circumferential granular involvement of the rectal mucosal surface (▶ Video 1). Histology showed a dense lymphoid infiltrate and lymphatic follicles (▶ Fig. 1).

Infection [3] and lymphoma were excluded (▶ Fig. 2) and a diagnosis of rectal tonsil was made [4]. Excellent clinical and endoscopic response was achieved after a 1-month course of rectal mesalazine administered twice daily (▶ Fig. 3). Because the lesion is benign in nature, with transformation into lymphoma being the exception [4], treatment was discontinued. The patient continued asymptomatic at 3-month clinical follow-up.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Video 1 Colonoscopic appearance of a rectal tonsil before and after treatment with mesalazine.