Gel-immersion electrohydraulic lithotripsy during digital single-operator cholangioscopy is helpful when bleeding occurs

Electrohydraulic lithotripsy (EHL) during digital single-operator cholangioscopy (dSOC) is a useful technique for difficult bile duct stones [1, 2]; however, visibility during dSOC can be poor in the presence of bleeding or infected bile juice. In such situations, EHL may be challenging. The use of gel-immersion endoscopy using a transparent gel (Viscoclear; Otsuka Pharmaceutical Factory, Tokushima, Japan), which is more viscous than saline (▶ Fig. 1), has recently been reported as a method for securing the visual field [3–5]. Use of the gel-immersion technique has not yet been reported in the pancreaticobiliary endoscopic field. We herein describe technical tips for gel-immersion EHL during dSOC for bile duct stones. An 82-year-old man was admitted to our hospital for treatment of huge common bile duct (CBD) stones. Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) was attempted. Biliary cannulation using a standard ERCP catheter (MTW; Endoskopie, Wesel, Germany) was performed successfully. After contrast medium had been injected into the biliary tract, a 0.025-inch guidewire (VisiGlide 1; Olympus Medical Systems) was deployed, and endoscopic sphincterotomy was performed. Subsequently, a digital single-operator cholangioscope (SpyGlass DS; Boston Scientific) was inserted into the CBD, and a CBD stone was successfully observed, while we repeatedly injected saline and performed aspiration. We performed EHL using a 2.4-Fr EHL probe combined with an electrohydraulic shockwave generator (Lithotron EL27; Walz Elektronik) (▶ Fig. 2a;▶ Video 1). Although EHL of the stone was partially successful, bleeding occurred owing to injury to the bile duct wall, and the endoscopic view gradually became obscured (▶ Fig. 2b). The gelatinous liquid was therefore injected into the CBD, after which a clear endoscopic view was obtained (▶ Fig. 2c). In addition, hemostasis was spontaneously obtained. Finally, complete EHL was successfully performed and a stent was inserted (▶ Fig. 2d).

In conclusion, gel-immersion EHL during dSOC may be useful where there is an unclear endoscopic view because of bleeding.

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Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

The authors

Akira Miyano, Takeshi Ogura, Atsushi Okuda, Nobu Nishioka, Hiroki Nishikawa
2nd Department of Internal Medicine, Osaka Medical and Pharmaceutical University, Osaka, Japan

Corresponding author

Takeshi Ogura, MD
2nd Department of Internal Medicine, Osaka Medical and Pharmaceutical University, 2-7 Daigakuchou, Takatsukishi, Osaka 569-8686, Japan
oguratakeshi0411@yahoo.co.jp
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Fig. 2. Cholangioscopic views showing: a endoscopic electrohydraulic lithotripsy being performed; b poor visibility because of bleeding; c the distal flange of a lumen-apposing metal stent clearly seen following the injection of the gelatinous liquid; d successful deployment of the lumen-apposing metal stent.