Small intestine perforation after colonoscopy: rare complication in patients with previous abdominal surgery

A 69-year-old woman with history of previous abdominal surgery (myomectomy and right hemicolectomy for an obstructive non-neoplastic inflammatory mass of uncertain etiology) presented with abdominal subocclusive episodes and weight loss. Blood analysis, tumor markers carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) and CA 19.9, and abdominal computed tomography (CT) were normal. The patient underwent colonoscopy under conscious sedation and the surgical anastomosis was accessed without difficulty. No pathology was detected and no therapeutic measures were undertaken during the procedure. Two hours later, the patient had severe abdominal pain with peritonism and leukocytosis (14.5 × 10⁹/L). An abdominal film revealed pneumoperitoneum, so the surgeon proceeded with an urgent laparotomy. Multiple peritoneal adhesions were found, some of which were adherent to both small intestine loops and the sigmoid colon. The colon was intact, but on removing the adhesions between the small intestine loops, a perforation was found in the mid-ileum. The perforated segment was resected and a primary anastomosis carried out. The patient was discharged 3 weeks after the surgery.

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References
2 Rathgeber SW, Wick TM. Colonoscopy completion and complication rates in a community gastroenterology practice. Gastrointest Endosc 2006; 64: 556–562

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Endoscopic therapy</th>
<th>Time of perforation</th>
<th>Previous ileal pathology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Razzak et al. [6]</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdman et al. [4]</td>
<td>Polypectomy</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nemeh et al. [7]</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chau et al. [5]</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Chronic ischemia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambert et al. [3]</td>
<td>Polypectomy</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teruel et al.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Main characteristics of published cases of small intestinal perforation after colonoscopy.

Bibliography
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