Pancreas divisum is the most common anatomic variant of pancreatic development and may lead to chronic pancreatitis [1,2]. Endoscopic stenting of the dorsal pancreatic duct is a safe and effective treatment for patients with chronic pancreatitis and pancreas divisum [3,4]. Here we report three cases of chronic pancreatitis and pancreas divisum successfully treated with endoscopic placement of a self-expanding metal stent (SEMS) in the minor papilla.

Between June 2005 and July 2006, three patients with chronic pancreatitis and pancreas divisum received a SEMS for relief of abdominal pain that was persisting despite several attempts at pancreatic plastic stent implantation (Wilson-Cook Medical GI Endoscopy, Winston-Salem, NC, USA). All patients received a covered pancreatic-type SEMS (Taewoong Medical Co., Seoul, South Korea), which was implanted into the minor papilla and the dorsal pancreatic duct using a standard technique with a duodenoscope (TJF-140 or TJF-160, Olympus Corp., Japan). All three endoscopic SEMS placements were successful and there were no complications relating to endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). Interestingly, 6 months after implantation, both a plain abdominal radiograph and duodenoscopy showed that all three SEMS had passed spontaneously (Fig. 1).

ERCP showed no new stones in the dorsal pancreatic duct and no further intervention was carried out. At a mean follow-up of 27 months (range 25 – 30 months), all patients were free of pain and none had steatorrhea or diabetes mellitus (Table 1). The results of our pilot trial with three patients suggests that covered SEMS should be considered as an alternative to the endoscopic management of chronic pancreatitis and pancreas divisum. Moreover, as all SEMS passed spontaneously through the minor papilla and dorsal pancreatic duct, further endoscopic extraction was not required.

Table 1  Patient and stent data and pain scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient</th>
<th>Age/sex</th>
<th>No. of sessions of PS placement</th>
<th>SEMS (diameter, length)</th>
<th>Pain score (VAS)</th>
<th>Follow-up (month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-PS</td>
<td>Post-PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>58/M</td>
<td>3 (7 F, 8.5 F, 10 F)</td>
<td>8 mm, 30 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>47/M</td>
<td>2 (7 F, 8.5 F)</td>
<td>8 mm, 30 mm</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43/M</td>
<td>3 (7 F, 8.5 F, 10 F)</td>
<td>8 mm, 30 mm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PS, plastic stent; F, French; SEMS, self-expandable metal stent; VAS, visual analog scale (0 = no pain; 10 = imaginary maximum pain).
References


Bibliography

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