Malignant fibrous histiocytoma of the small bowel with colon metastasis

A 59-year-old man was admitted to the Institute of Gastroenterology with recurrent abdominal pain and weight loss. Colonoscopy revealed dark fecal content in the ileum (melena). A simple small-bowel follow-through was indicated, which showed the presence of a filling defect image in the jejunum, suggestive of a tumor in that location.

An antegrade double-balloon enteroscopy was indicated. Four ulcerated tumors (Fig. 1) were observed immediately after the Treitz angle, separated by normal mucosa of about 10–15 cm, with severe lumen stenosis caused by the last tumor, which impeded the progress of the endoscope (Fig. 1d). Biopsy specimens were studied at the Institute of Oncology, and pathological diagnosis was a pleomorphic malignant fibrous histiocytoma. The patient underwent surgery with resection of 150 cm of affected jejunum, with subsequent chemotherapy cycles. Months later, a follow-up computed tomography (CT) scan described a mass projecting between the hepatic flexure and transverse colon. Although anemia and leukopenia were controlled, the patient died months later after an episode of severe hematemesis. The histological analysis of the colon tumor proved it to be a metastasis of a pleomorphic malignant fibrous histiocytoma.

Malignant fibrous histiocytoma is a rare sarcoma in the digestive tract. There are fewer than 50 primary cases reported in world literature, and fewer than 10 metastatic cases [1,2]. Treatment relies on early diagnosis and resection of the intestinal block, with regional lymph node dissection [3]. Radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy have not been reported as useful because of the tumor’s frequent recurrence [4]. A size greater than 5 cm is linked closely with the occurrence of metastasis [2,5].

In our case, the patient was operated on before any evidence of metastasis, after double-balloon enteroscopy determined the presence of jejunal tumors. This allowed the removal of only the compromised intestinal block and improved the patient’s quality of life for over a year.

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O. M. Villa Jiménez1, H. R. Hernández Garcés2, C. Ruenes Domech3, O. M. Hano García4, S. Quintero Cayola5, J. L. Guerra Mesa5, F. Pérez Triana5, L. Wood Rodríguez5

1 Institute of Gastroenterology, Department of Small Bowel and Malabsorptive Diseases, Havana, Cuba
2 Institute of Gastroenterology, Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Department, Havana, Cuba
3 Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology, Pathology Department, Havana, Cuba
4 Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology, Department of Splanchnic Surgery, Havana, Cuba
5 Institute of Gastroenterology, Department of Colorectal Disease, Havana, Cuba
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Corresponding author
O. M. Villa Jiménez, MD
Institute of Gastroenterology
Department of Small Bowel and Malabsorptive Diseases
25 Number 503 Street
Havana 10400
Cuba
Fax: +537-8333253
villa@infomed.sld.cu