Born Again: Recurrent Hepatic Encephalopathy in an Adult without Cirrhosis

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Abstract

Keywords
- Abernethy malformation
- congenital extrahepatic portosystemic shunt
- portosystemic shunt

A 43-year-old-man developed disorientation while driving, losing control of the car and hit the pedestrian curb side. Evaluation in the emergency department revealed hyperammonemia with coarse echotexture of the liver on ultrasound imaging. He was diagnosed to have hepatic encephalopathy with underlying chronic liver disease and portal hypertension and was referred for further management. On further evaluation, liver tests were normal, magnetic resonance imaging of the brain was within normal limits and liver stiffness was 5.4 (normal < 6 kPa) excluding a diagnosis of cirrhosis or central nervous system involvement. Contrast-enhanced computed tomography (CECT) imaging revealed a prominent portosystemic shunt (PSS) between the inferior mesenteric vein and the left internal iliac vein and attenuated portal vein without features of chronic liver disease or portal hypertension suggestive of type 2 congenital extrahepatic portosystemic shunt (CEPS, Abernethy malformation; Fig. 1). The patient underwent plug-assisted retrograde transvenous occlusion (PARTO) of PSS (Fig. 2) via jugular (right internal jugular vein) access. One month following PARTO procedure, complete thrombosis of PSS was observed with increase in the calibre of the main portal vein and its right branch (Fig. 3). The patient is back to performing his daily routines. Abernethy malformation is a rare congenital anomaly in which there is direct/indirect communication between the portal and systemic venous

Fig. 1 Contrast-enhanced computed tomography (CECT) reveals large extra-hepatic porto-systemic shunt (arrow) between the inferior mesenteric vein and the left internal iliac vein.
circulation. Patients present with features related to the shunting of portal blood, associated congenital abnormalities, or hepatic lesions such as hepatoblastoma or focal nodular hyperplasia. Adult onset presentation of CEPS is very rare and for type 2 Abernethy malformation, shunt occlusion by an interventional radiologist is an excellent life-saving treatment option.

**Authors’ Contributions**
Authors S.R. and C.A.P.: study concept and design; authors S.R. and T.G.: acquisition of data; author C.A.P.: drafting of the manuscript; and authors C.A.P., S.R. and T.G.: critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content.

**Conflict of Interest**
None declared.