Percutaneous removal of impacted double J stent in a transplant kidney

Rahul Kumar, Chandan J Das, Vathulru Seenu¹, Amlesh Seth²

Departments of Radiology, ¹Surgical Discipline, ²Urology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India

Correspondence: Dr. Chandan J Das, Department of Radiology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi, India.
E-mail: dascj@yahoo.com

Abstract

Prophylactic double J (DJ) stent insertion has been adopted as a routine procedure in renal transplant patients for internal urinary diversion and for protecting ureteroneocystostomy anastomosis. The timely and early removal of stent has been proved to reduce the occurrence of stent-associated complications such as migration, encrustation, and infection. The most commonly used procedure of stent removal via retrograde cystoscopic approach can sometimes be technically very difficult leaving antegrade approach as another alternative to open surgery as the last resort. Here, we describe a case of antegradely removed impacted DJ stent by pushing it free into the urinary bladder followed by cystoscopic removal.

Key words: Cystoscopy; DJ Stent; guide wire; transplant kidney

Introduction

Placement of a prophylactic double J (DJ) stent has been adopted as routine procedure in kidney transplantation for protecting ureteroneocystostomy anastomosis. The stent is usually removed retrogradely by performing a cystoscopy. However, in case of impaction or fracture of stent, an antegrade route may be used for its removal. Here, we present a unique case of impacted stent in a transplant kidney, which was removed by antegrade puncture of the pelvicalyceal system.

Case Report

A 23-year-old male patient with chronic kidney disease underwent live renal transplant in May 2014 from his mother as the donor. The surgeons performed prophylactic DJ stenting of the ureter to protect ureteroneocystostomy anastomosis. As per the protocol of our institute, the patient was called for cystoscopic removal of DJ stent after 4 weeks. The procedure was accomplished under local anesthesia taking all aseptic precautions. However, the stent could not be removed even after two consecutive attempts made by experienced urologists. The reason for failure was thought to be inadvertent suturing with biodegradable suture through the lower end of the DJ stent at the vesicoureteric anastomotic site. Considering the nature of biodegradable suture, patient was again called for the stent retrieval after 6 weeks of initial attempt. During the removal attempt, there was inadvertent fracture of the lower J part of the stent. The subsequent limited acquisition of plain computed tomography of the pelvis showed partially fractured distal end of the stent [Figure 1]. No evidence of calcification or encrustation was seen along the stent. Transplant kidney was normal in size, outlines with decompressed pelvicalyceal system. Proximal loop and distal part of
the stent was seen within the renal pelvis and urinary bladder, respectively. Then, the patient was referred to us for percutaneous removal of the impacted stent. The patient was shifted to the angiography suite for the stent retrieval procedure, which was performed under local anesthesia, taking all aseptic precautions and informed consent. The transplant kidney pelvicalyceal system was distended by giving intravenous frusemide and subsequently upper pole anterior calyx was punctured under ultrasound (USG) guidance with micropuncture needle [Figure 2A] from anterolateral approach so that the ureter could be negotiated easily through the approach. It was followed by advancement of 5 French multipurpose angiographic (MPA) catheter over 0.035 inch terumo J tip guide wire into the renal pelvis proximal to the tip of DJ stent under intermittent fluoroscopy guidance. The hydrophilic terumo guide wire was exchanged with 145 cm 0.035 inch superstiff Amplatz guide wire with subsequent slow stepwise pushing of the stent distally under fluoroscopic guidance [Figure 2B] by the stiff guide wire. The free delivery of the stent into the urinary bladder was achieved in approximately 15 minutes. Subsequently, cystoscopy was performed and the stent was successfully removed. Anterograde pyelography [Figure 2C] with nephrostomy tube in situ showing the opacification of pelvicalyceal system and ureter without any filling defect. No periprocedure complication was encountered.

Discussion

The prevention and treatment of urological complications remains an important area for the renal transplant surgeon.[1] Major vesicoureteric complications (anastomotic leakage and/or strictures) present early after transplantation and contribute to patient morbidity, graft loss, and mortality.[2‑5] Ureteric ischemia is considered to be chiefly responsible for the early ureteric complications in post transplantation period.[6] The utilization of the DJ stent has been a particularly important innovation in avoiding and treating these complications.[1] Prophylactic stenting can also treat minor leaks and obstruction at the anastomotic site and has been found to improve renal function.[5‑7] Routine anastomotic stenting in renal transplantation has been adopted as usual practice at most of the renal transplant centres but the debate continues.[2] However, using stent is not free from stent-associated complications. The possible complications include increase in the severity of urinary tract infection, persistent hematuria, bladder discomfort, stent migration, breakage, encrustation, and complications.
The procedure has two different phases—fluoroscopic manipulation of the stent by guide wire followed by cystoscopic removal. Although the technique is novel, it should only be used in difficult situations where routine procedures fail to remove impacted stent.

Conclusion

This case highlights a new technique of percutaneous pushing an impacted DJ stent free into the urinary bladder followed by successful retrograde retrieval of the stent by cystoscopy, thus avoiding the need of painful percutaneous track dilatation and use of bulky larger instrument and logically preventing possible urothelial injury.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

References