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DIVERTICULUM OF THE URINARY BLADDER

Abstract: Bladder diverticulum involves herniations of the mucosa between the smooth muscle fibers of the detrusor. Causes can be acquired, congenital and iatrogenic. They cause serious complications including rupture of the diverticulum and development of acute abdomen, as well as intradiverticular neoplasm. They are often discovered incidentally during radiographic evaluation and study of nonspecific symptoms or signs of the lower urinary system. Diverticulectomy is the procedure of choice in treatment. A 42-year-old man came to the family medicine clinic for a routine check-up. No problems, so far healthy. He has a positive family history of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Ultrasound examination of the abdomen (convex probe 3.5–5 MHz) revealed a large septated cystic change with a diameter of 24x15 mm in the right subhepatic area. Computed tomography in the right half of the hemiabdomen, i.e. in the right infracolic space, identifies a clearly limited thin-walled cystic change of size 108x99x100 mm (LLxAPxCC) that descends in the lower pole into the pelvis. Intraoperatively, it was determined that the cystic change corresponds to a bladder diverticulum. The patient underwent diverticulectomy and Lichtenstein hernioplasty. Recovered, with a stable general condition and satisfactory surgical findings, he was discharged home on the seventh postoperative day. Careful evaluation and ultrasound examination in the family medicine clinic enabled timely diagnosis and successful intervention and prevented serious complications.

Key words: urinary bladder, diverticulum, obstruction, congenital development

INTRODUCTION

Bladder diverticulum includes herniations of the mucosa between the smooth muscle fibers of the detrusor (1, 2, 3). The causes can be acquired, congenital and iatrogenic (1–6). Acquired diverticula are predominantly present in men, most of

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whom are older (peak incidence at the age of 60) (4). They are found in 15% of obstructive conditions of the lower urinary tract (4, 6). Smaller dimensions, associated with bladder trabeculation (1, 2, 5). They are made of a thin wall (without muscularis propria) with a narrow neck or opening that communicates with the bladder lumen (4). Congenital diverticula make up about 2% of all bladder diverticula (4). They are more common in men (5:1) and occasionally associated with other congenital syndromes (4). They imply a disorder in the development of the detrusor muscle in the absence of subvesical obstacles (normal intravesical pressure) (5). The wall of congenital diverticulum is formed by all layers of the bladder (including the muscularis propria) (4). They are mostly solitary and often of larger dimensions (1, 2). Bladder diverticula are often asymptomatic (6). In addition, symptoms caused by retention of urine in the diverticulum may be present (1, 3). They are often discovered accidentally during radiographic assessment and study of non-specific symptoms or signs of the lower urinary system (2). Diverticulectomy is the treatment of choice (2).

CASE REPORT

A 42-year-old man came to the family medicine clinic for a routine examination. No problems, so far healthy. He has a positive family history of cardiovascular disease and cancer. A physical examination reveals an orderly finding. Ultrasound examination of the abdomen (convex probe 3.5–5 MHz) revealed a large septated cystic change with a diameter of 24x15 mm in the right subhepatic region (Figure 1). In the laboratory findings, elevated values of leukocytes (10.5 g/L), cholesterol (6.43 mmol/L) and triglycerides (4.4 mmol/L) are present. On the recommendation of the abdominal surgeon, the patient is referred for computed tomography. At the same time, in the right half of the hemiabdomen, i.e. in the right infracolic space, a clearly limited thin-walled cystic change of size 108x99x100 mm (LLxAPxCC) can be seen, which descends in the lower pole into the pelvis. Its anterolateral contour is in close intimate contact with the inner contour of the abdominal wall. The cyst exerts a mass effect, that is, it slightly expands and compresses the surrounding coils of the small intestine. In addition, there is a simple cyst with a diameter of 70 mm on the right extrarenal, a cyst with dense content with a diameter of 32 mm in the lower part of the right kidney and 2 to 3 cysts with a diameter of up to 6 mm interpolarily and in the lower pole of the left kidney. After preoperative antibiotic prophylaxis and deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis, the operation was performed under general endotracheal anesthesia. Intraoperatively, it was determined that the cystic change corresponds to a bladder diverticulum. Diverticulectomy is performed by the urologist, hernioplasty according to Lichtenstein by the abdominal surgeon. Recovered, in a stable general condition and with satisfactory surgical findings, the patient is discharged home on the seventh postoperative day.

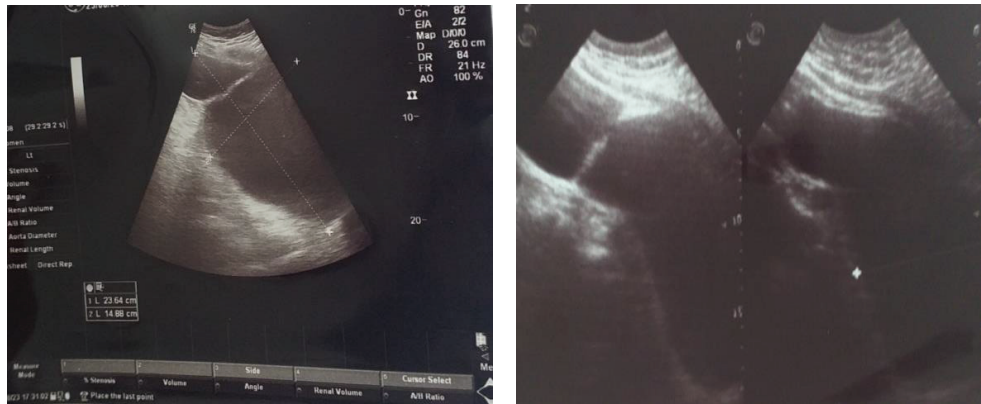


Figure 1. *Abdominal ultrasound*

DISCUSSION

Congenital diverticula are the most common malformations of the urinary bladder (6). They were first described by Hutch in 1962 (1). According to Fox, 98% of congenital diverticula are located in the immediate vicinity of the orifice or on the trigonum of the bladder, and only 2% originate from the fundus (1). They arise due to a defect in the connection between the trigonum and the remaining part of the bladder wall, which have a different embryological origin (the trigonum is of mesodermal origin, the remaining part of the bladder wall arises from the endoderm) (1, 6). Diverticula on the vertex originate from the urachus (1). There are also special forms of bladder diverticulum that are the result of intrauterine subvesical obstruction (congenital bladder neck contracture, presence of the posterior urethral valve) or bladder innervation disorder (sphincterospasm) (1). Congenital diverticula are solitary with dimensions that vary considerably and may be equal to or greater than the volume of the urinary bladder (6). The dimensions and shape of the communication opening between the diverticulum and the urinary bladder are significant, bearing in mind that because the communication opening causes difficulty in diverticular drainage with an intradiverticular path of urine (6). On the other hand, acquired diverticulum is a renoureteral protective mechanism against increased intravesical pressure caused by posterior urethral valve, anterior urethral diverticulum, urethral stricture, neurogenic bladder dysfunction or vesicosphincteric dysfunction (6). Very rarely, they arise iatrogenically (detrusor myotomy) (6). There is an opinion that they can also occur after a urinary infection that weakens the detrusor muscle (5). Acquired diverticula are multiple and usually smaller in size (1).

Bladder diverticula are very often asymptomatic (7). However, retention of urine in the diverticulum can cause hematuria due to calculus, urinary tract infection, reflux and ureteral obstruction, urinary retention, rupture of the diverticulum and development of acute abdomen, dysplasia, metaplasia, leukoplakia and intradiverticular neoplasm (0.8%–10%) (1, 7, 8). Ultrasound determines the presence of diverticulum, changes in the upper urinary tract and subvesical obstructions (9). Computed tomography determines the exact dimensions of the diverticulum, the proximity of the back surface of the diverticulum and the adjacent organs (rectum and homolateral ureter) (9). Cystoscopy identifies the dimensions of the neck of the diverticulum and its position in relation to the ureteral meatus (9). Retrograde urethrocytography is the method of choice for detecting bladder diverticula (9). Urodynamic examination provides additional information that is very useful in etiological research (9). The differential diagnosis includes anomalies of the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes, urachal cysts, ectopic ureters, ureterocoeles, Muller's cysts, postoperative changes such as lymphocele (2). In a small number of acquired diverticulum, with the removal of the obstruction, the diverticulum recedes (10). The largest number of diverticulum requires diverticulectomy, which can be performed with an extravesical, intravesical or combined approach (9).

In the presented case, considering the position, size and solitary nature of the diverticulum, it was most likely a congenital diverticulum. Timely diagnosis and successful intervention prevented serious complications.

CONCLUSION

Bladder diverticula have no unique presentation and are usually discovered incidentally. They cause serious complications including rupture of diverticulum and development of acute abdomen, as well as intradiverticular neoplasm. Careful evaluation and ultrasound examination in the family medicine clinic plays an important role in timely diagnosis and successful therapeutic intervention.

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