

A rare cause of ischemic colitis : colonoscopy

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To the Editor,

Ischemic colitis is the most common form of ischemic injury to the gastrointestinal tract representing more than half of the patients with gastrointestinal ischemia. There are many causes of ischemic colitis such as mesenteric artery embolism, thrombosis or colonic hypo-perfusion but colonoscopy-related ischemic colitis are quite rare and has been reported with only eight cases in the literature to date (1-6). Here we present case of ischemic colitis following colonoscopy in a patient with no risk factors for ischemic colitis.

A 46 year-old man was admitted with abdominal pain and rectal bleeding for two days. Colonic polyps had been diagnosed by colonoscopy three days ago. A repeat colonoscopy showed severe linear mucosal ulcerations of descending and ascending colon suggestive of ischemic colitis (Fig. 1). Doppler ultrasound and Angiography revealed normal mesenteric vascular flow. Focal mucosal destruction and superficial erosions were detected in biopsy specimen from areas of linear ulcers. The patient was treated with fluids and parenteral nutrition for a few days. Two months later, control colonoscopy showed normal colonic mucosa (Fig. 2).

Colonoscopy is rare cause of ischemic colitis. The risk factors of ischemic colitis following colonoscopy include intravascular volume depletion, vascular diseases and

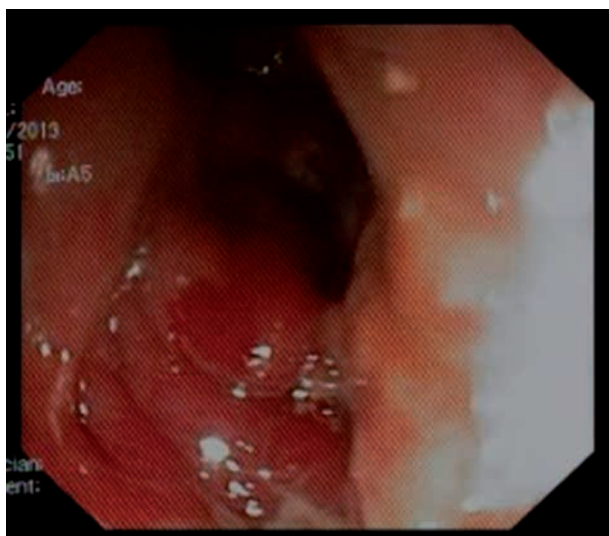


Fig. 1

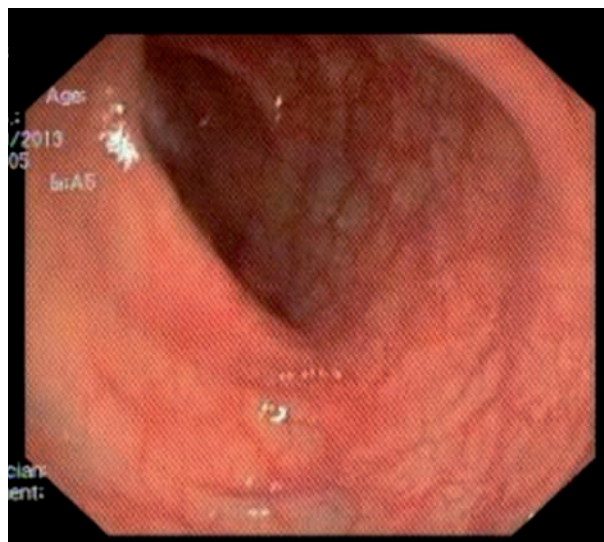


Fig. 2

technical difficulties. Especially, patients with anxiety have increased risk of colonoscopy-related ischemic colitis because small vessels more contraction with contribution of increased intraluminal pressure during colonoscopy (4-5). Supportive treatment such as fluid replacement and monitoring for complications such as perforation or severe bleeding is sufficient in patient with colonoscopy-induced ischemic colitis.

Colonoscopy-induced ischemic colitis seen within the first 48 hours after colonoscopy in all patients so far (1-6). Colonoscopy-induced ischemic colitis is usually temporary. These patients do not need a special treatment and occurs clinical improvement within 24-48 hours with supportive treatment. And also, colonoscopy under anesthesia may be useful to prevent ischemic colitis in patients with anxiety.

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