

4th International Conference & Exhibition on

Surgery

October 05-07, 2015 Dubai, UAE

Gallstone disease, a different disease in a subpopulation of Sri Lanka: A study to determine the prevalence of different types of gallstones in a sub population of Sri Lanka

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Introduction: This study was carried out to determine the prevalence of different types of gallstones in Sri Lanka and to identify the association of known risk factors to the formation of a particular type of stone.

Methods: Gallstones were harvested from a continuous sample of 60 patients who underwent cholecystectomy for symptomatic gallstone disease in Colombo, Sri Lanka over a period of one year. Gallstones were analyzed physically and then chemically, using the wet chemistry method and categorized into the three major types according to the revised Japanese classification system.

Results: 55.3% (n=32) had pigmented stones, 38.3% (n=23) had mixed cholesterol stones and only 8.3% (n=5) had pure cholesterol stones. Advancing age is significantly associated with the occurrence of pigment stones (p=0.003). Majority of the study population were overweight (36.7%) or obese (56.7%), but no correlation between the BMI and the stone type was observed. Serum total cholesterol was significantly higher in patients with mixed cholesterol stones (p=0.000). No positive correlations were observed between the type of stone and known co-morbidities and any demographic variables except age.

Conclusion: Pigment stones are the commonest stone type found in the study population and the prevalence of it is associated with advancing age. Mixed cholesterol stones were associated with high serum total cholesterol levels. Pure cholesterol stones are very rare in the study population.

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