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Melanosis coli occurring in patients with chronic constipation

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Purpose: It was defined in 1829 by Cruveilhier for the first time and the term “Melanosis Coli” (MC) was used in 1857 by Virchow. MC is characterised by lipofuscin pigment cumulation on the macrophages at colon mucosa. Formerly this pigment was thought to be melanine. Mostly it is found out accidentally while the reason of the constipation is being investigated. It is a benign incident. However, in some publications it was reported to be related to colorectal malignities. Mostly it occurs by people who used anthraquinone laxatives for a long time. In this presentation, the importance of definitely questioning laxative administration by patients with chronic constipation symptom and being careful by the colonoscopic examination with regard to MC is emphasized.

Equipment-Method: Our cases for whom MC was determined between the years 2010-2014 in our clinic are investigated. These cases have been evaluated retrospectively.

Findings: Our 4 evaluated patients were female and their average age was 41 (aged between 35–45). All patients had various digestive system symptoms like constipation, dyspepsy, stomach ache. The duration of the symptoms was varying between 1-10 years. All patients had a history of using laxatives and herbal tea. Anemia was determined by all patients. Upper and lower digestive system endoscopy and endoscopic biopsy examination were performed by all patients. MC was determined by all patients. Melanosis was not found outside of the colon. Anthraquinone derivative laxatives and herbal teas were discontinued by all patients. Dietary arrangement was made. Control colonoscopy was performed after two years. The biopsies taken reported that MC condition was continuing, however there was no change in favour of malignity.

Conclusion: Although the accidentally determined MC looks like a benign disease, colonoscopic biopsies should be taken during control endoscopies because of its suspicious relation to colorectal adenoma and carcinoma. By patients consulting with long-term constipation symptom, usage of laxative should be questioned definitely and melanosis coli should be kept in mind in colonoscopic examinations.

Biography

Vahit Onur Gul, MD, graduated from Gulhane Medical School in 1998 and earned MD license. In 2009, he finished Residency in General Surgery (Department of General Surgery, Gulhane Medical School). He is a General Surgeon at the Department of Surgery, Edremit Military Hospital. He took micro surgery courses at the University of Zurich in 2013. His research interests include laparoscopic surgery, metabolic disorders (obesity, liver steatosis, metabolic syndrome), hepato-biliary pathophysiology and gallstone disease and laparoscopic treatment for benign esophageal disorders, abdominal wall hernias.

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