CASE REPORT

UNUSUAL CASE OF 5 YEARS OLD BOY PRESENTING WITH CHRONIC PAIN ABDOMEN DUE TO MULTIPLE SEWING NEEDLES IN THE ABDOMEN: A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT: We report an unusual case 5 years old boy presenting with chronic pain abdomen secondary to ingested sewing needles at 1 year age. All needles perforated silently and placed in retroperitoneum, omentum and subcutaneous space. All of the needles were removed during laparotomy with the help of C-arm fluoroscopy.

KEYWORDS: Abdomen, sewing needles, C-arm.

INTRODUCTION: Ingestion of metallic sewing needles have been reported in literature in adult patient with mental illness,¹ Prisoners² and women with hysteria³. Ingestion of sewing needles in children is rare. We present a 5 years old boy presenting with chronic pain abdomen who had the history of ingestion multiple sewing needles at 1 year age. Case report: A 5 years old boy was brought to us with recurrent pain abdomen since one year. On examination child was active and with sound mental health. Per abdominal examination showed palpable pricking body under skin, one in right hypochondrium and another left to umbilicus. X ray abdomen showed about 6 needles present in abdominal and pelvic region [Fig. 1]. We took the history with the mother, she was a tailor and the child ingested them when he was 1 year old and she ignored as the child was normal until last year, when he complained pain abdomen. Since then child was suffering with recurrent attacks of peri umbilical dull aching pain. Laparotomy was done and found that all the swallowed needles were migrated silently from Bowel. Two of them were placed in subcutaneous space, one was engulfed in greater omentum, three were present in pelvis in retrorectal and pararectal region [Fig. 2]. We used C- arm fluoroscopy to localize them. All needles were removed. Post-operative course was uneventful.

DISCUSSION: Metallic sewing needles ingestion has been reported in patient with schizophrenia, attention seeking behaviour in personality disorders and in prisoners or in case of self – mutilation.¹⁻³ Ingestion of metallic needles is unusual in children. Most of the foreign bodies ingested by children passed out without any ill effects.^{4,5} Sharp foreign bodies like ingested needles may perforate the viscera and present as acute abdomen with pneumoperitoneum^{6,7} or they may pass out through the intestinal wall silently and settle in Somewhere else like in our case. Cases have been reported with foreign bodies presenting in appendix⁸ or in the liver.^{9,10,11}

In our case all the needles perforated the gut silently, two were settled in subcutaneous space, three needles perforated silently the rectum and present one in there trorectal space and two in pararectal space in the pelvis. Pain abdomen in our case is due to chronic inflammation around the needles in subcutaneous space and peritoneal reaction.

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It is very difficult to localize the metallic needles during laparotomy. C-arm fluroscopy was used in our case to localize the needles. It obviates extensive explorations and shortens the operation time.¹²

CONCLUSION: Management of foreign bodies like metallic needles is a challenge to the surgeon. Majority of the foreign bodies passed spontaneously in the stools. Sharp foreign bodies like metallic sewing needles perforate the gut and present with acute abdomen. In some instances perforate silently may present later as chronic pain abdomen. C-arm fluoroscopy is very useful in localizing sharp metallic foreign bodies.

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Fig. 1: X-ray of the baby showed multiple needles in the abdomen and pelvis

Fig. 2: Needle being removed from omentum

Fig 3: Removed sewing needles

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