Staples As Foreign- Body Oesophagus

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Abstract

A bunch of staples is being reported as oesophageal foreign body in a five and half month old infant. Radiologically these staples appeared as single compact bunch, however, during oesophagoscopy these were removed in two and threes.

Key Words

Foreign body; oesophagus; staple

Simple curiosity and ignorance make children insert different objects in their natural orifices. The aerodigestive foreign bodies generally pass uneventfully through the gastrointestinal tract¹. But some foreign bodies of oesophagus are not uncommon problem for otolaryngologist. A case of five and half month old infant who accidentally swallowed a bunch of staples is being reported here.

Case Report

The five-month-old male infant was referred to us from our casualty services with history of ingestion of foreign body. The clinical examination of oral cavity and

oropharynx did reveal any foreign body. The child was X-rayed for any radiopaque foreign body. A rectangular radio-opaque foreign body was detected in the lower oesophagus. (Fig 1) The oesophagoscopy was done under general anaesthesia and revealed staples at approximately 20 cm. From the upper incisors. Initially these pins were single compact bunch but when caught in the forceps, got separated because of the impaction into the oesophageal mucosa. These staples were removed in two and threes. (Fig 2) The infant was treated with systemic antibiotics for two days and post-operative period was uneventful. The child was discharged after two days of observations.

Fig. 1. Photograph showing radio-opaque foreign body at the lower end of oesophagus.

Discussion

The foreign body in oesophagus has been reported as early as in a three-week-old baby.² Most of foreign body ingestion occurs in children between 1-3 years of age. Though the incidence of various types of oesophageal foreign bodies are common in children,

Fig. 2. Photograph showing the extracted foreign body (bunch of staples).

but their occurrence in infant is relatively rare. Nandi and Ong³ reviewed 2394 cases of 12 year duration and reported minimal age only 7 months in whom foreign body was removed. In an another study, Crysdale⁴ found only 8 cases of foreign bodies under the age of 6 months out of 484 cases. In both these series, the coins of different shapes and sizes were commonly encountered. Spitz¹ reported straight pins, nails and open safety pins in oesophagus in a series of 660 patients below the age of 16 years.

There are many sizes and material of which staples are made of. The commonly used staples are made of stainless steel, bronze or copper. In this present case, the staples were made of steel and were relatively malleable and thin. The malleability of staples really helped the removal in two and threes, and therefore no difficulty was faced in removing the staples from the oesophagus in an infant.

References

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