CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Gas Gangrene of the Gallbladder

An 84-year-old man presented with right-sided upper abdominal pain and fulminant sepsis. The wall of the gallbladder could not be differentiated on sonography, and computed tomography revealed emphysematous cholecystitis with pneumatosis of the gallbladder wall (Figure, yellow arrows) and aerobilia of the bile ducts (not shown). Sepsis treatment by means of fluid replacement and antibiotics with piperacillin/tazobactam were accompanied by immediate laparoscopic cholecystectomy. A massive amount of *Clostridium perfringens* was demonstrated in the gallbladder aspirate. The toxic clinical picture with pneumatosis of the gallbladder corresponds to gas gangrene of the gallbladder. This life-threatening situation must be distinguished from the frequently encountered microbiological detection of *C. perfringens* in the gallbladder without related clinical symptoms. The treatment described above led to rapid recovery.

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