

Clinical Quiz

Submitted by: Mohammed Y. Hasosab, MD, ABP

From the Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology, King Abdul-Aziz Medical City, National Guard Hospital, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Address correspondence to: Dr. Mohammed Y. Hasosab, Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology, King Saud Bin Abdul-Aziz University for Health Sciences, National Guard Health Affairs, PO Box 8202, Jeddah 21482, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Tel/Fax. +966 (2) 6240000 Ext. 22759. E-mail: hasosah2007@yahoo.com

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A child with dysphagia secondary to abnormal esophageal infiltrations

Clinical Presentation

A 13-year-old male presented with progressive dysphagia and failure to thrive. He had poor appetite, but no chronic vomiting, or abdominal distension. He was a product of full-term, normal pregnancy. His systemic reviews were unremarkable. There was no ingestion of corrosive injury. His weight and height were both below the fifth percentile for age, otherwise his physical examination was normal. His laboratory findings were normal, except for a peripheral eosinophil count of $2.1 \times 10^3/l$ (normal range: $0.1-0.7 \times 10^3/l$). An upper gastrointestinal series of barium swallow is shown in Figure 1a. He underwent an esophago-gastroscopy and histopathological biopsy of the esophagus as shown in Figure 1b. This case is presented to describe the diseases featured below as it is an emerging worldwide disease, and recent epidemiologic studies suggest a rising incidence.

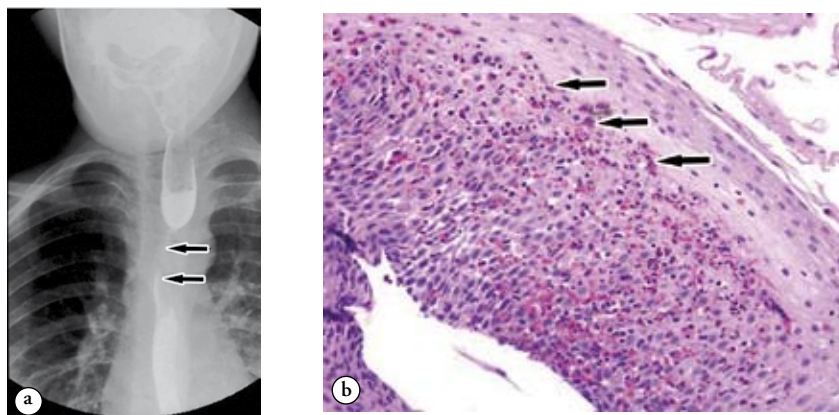


Figure 1 - A image of the patient showing a) upper gastrointestinal series of barium swallow, and b) histopathological biopsy of the esophagus

Questions

1. Describe the abnormalities in Figures 1a and 1b.
2. What is the diagnosis?
3. What are the common symptoms?
4. What is the treatment option?

Clinical Quiz

Answers and Discussion

1. **Abnormalities.** The upper gastrointestinal series of barium swallow in **Figure 1a** demonstrated that the middle third of the esophagus had a narrow zone at the level of aortic knuckle measuring approximately 2 cm, likely representing esophageal stricture (black arrows). Esophageal biopsy in **Figure 1b** showed a dense superficial eosinophilic infiltrates in esophageal mucosa. High-powered field (HPF) shows >20 eosinophils, and aggregates of eosinophils (black arrows).
2. **Diagnosis.** The diagnosis is eosinophilic esophagitis (EE). The diagnosis of EE rests on the presence of pan-esophagitis with tissue eosinophilia more than 20 eosinophils per HPF on light microscopy.¹ The etiology of EE is not known. However, EE is a chronic, immune/antigen-mediated disease characterized by an eosinophilic infiltration of esophagus without infiltration in other parts of the gastrointestinal tract.²
3. **Symptoms.** Patients with EE present not only with dysphagia and swallowing difficulties, as do adults with the disease, but also with abdominal pain, reflux-like symptoms, heartburn, and poor growth. We have shown in our previous study³ that failure to thrive and abdominal pain in male, atopic school-aged children was the most common feature of EE.
4. **Treatment.** The most common treatments of EE are dietary therapy (elimination diet and elemental formulas) and topical steroids (swallowed fluticasone and budesonide). Other treatment modalities include proton pump inhibitor, esophageal dilation, and anti-interleukin-5 monoclonal antibody agents.⁴

References

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