

# Splenic Hydatid Cyst- A Case Report

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## ABSTRACT

Asymptomatic hydatid cyst presents as an incidental finding. It is caused by *Echinococcus granulosus*. The liver is known to be involved organ, while the spleen is rarely involved. Hydatid cyst of the spleen should be considered as one of the differential diagnosis in patients presenting with left hypochondriac pain. This poses a clinical challenge. The decision on conservation or surgery is also a dilemma. To decrease incidence of Overwhelming Postsplenectomy Infection (OPSI) for elective splenectomy, vaccination protocol should be followed. It is important for the clinician to bear in mind the possibility of incidental asymptomatic splenic hydatid cyst and management protocols. Authors, hereby reports, a case of 26-year-old lady with complain of left hypochondriac pain, diagnosed with Ultrasound Sonography (USG) and Contrast Enhanced Computed Tomography (CECT) scan as splenic hydatid cyst. The patient underwent splenectomy after completion of vaccination to avoid OPSI. At six month follow-up the patient was asymptomatic.

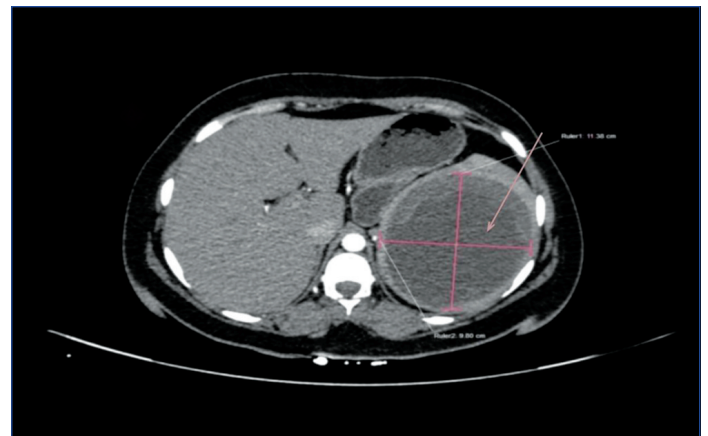
**Keywords:** Abdominal pain, Left hypochondriac lump, Overwhelming postsplenectomy infection

## CASE REPORT

A 26-year-old female with complain of left hypochondriac pain for 24 months duration was admitted to a tertiary care center in Mumbai. Patient had pain at intervals, intermittent, non progressing, non radiating, with no aggravating and relieving factors. Patient also had abdominal fullness and early satiety. No history of fever, swelling, previous operation and any pet at home. Bowel and bladder habits were normal. General and clinical examination was normal. On abdominal examination, an ill-defined palpable lump was present in the left hypochondriac region of approximate size 6x6cm, moving with respiration, which appeared cystic in consistency. As patient had presented with pain in left hypochondrium, fullness and early satiety, clinical diagnosis of splenic enlargement was done and USG was done to confirm the same. Ultrasound of abdomen revealed enlarged spleen with well-defined rounded anechoic lesion seen in the upper pole of spleen, measuring 9x9x8cm suggestive of splenic abscess, hydatid cyst, epidermoid cyst, hematoma, pseudocyst, neoplasm. The cyst was anechoic in nature so, could be either a parasitic cyst (most common hydatid) or non parasitic like an epidermoid cyst or a pseudocyst (majority have history of trauma). Blood investigations were within normal limits.

CECT scan of abdomen and pelvis was done for further evaluation of lump which revealed well-defined, thick-walled cystic lesion measuring 11 x 9 x 11 cm with non enhancing thick membrane in non dependent position within a small eccentric peripherally placed daughter cyst. Cyst was seen to cause mass effect by pushing left kidney inferolaterally, and displacing splenic vein anteriorly, diaphragm superiorly, distal body and tail of pancreas and splenic artery inferiorly [Table/Fig-1]. This was suggestive of hydatid cyst type-2. High resolution CT (HRCT) thorax was done to rule out lung hydatid.

In view of elective splenectomy, patient was prophylactically vaccinated against capsulated organism (*pneumococcal*, *meningococcal*, *haemophilus influenzae*) to prevent OPSI. Patient was prescribed tablet albendazole for four days prior to surgery to reduce tension, stabilise cyst and decrease chances of rupture during surgery. Elective exploratory laparotomy was done for splenectomy and excised tissue was sent for histopathology.



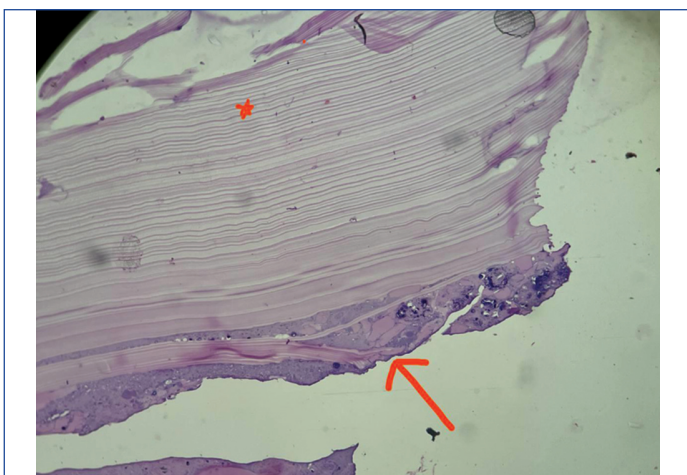
[Table/Fig-1]: CECT abdomen showing a large splenic hydatid cyst (arrow)

On histopathological examination, grossly, the lesion was single 17 x 17 x 7.5 cm multiloculated cystic mass occupying the entire spleen, with a thin small rim of splenic tissue present at periphery. On cut section, clear liquid (hydatid fluid) approximately 100 mL was present in cyst. Ectocyst had tender coconut appearance. Endocyst showed scolex and daughter cyst [Table/Fig-2]. Histopathology showed lamellated ectocyst (star) and granular endocyst (arrow) [Table/Fig-3] and endocyst cellular lining with granular contents [Table/Fig-4].

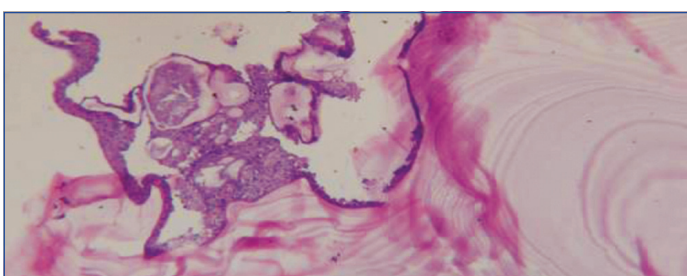
The postoperative period was uneventful and the patient recovered well. In the postoperative period, patient continued on tablet albendazole for a month. Patient followed-up after six months with normal sonography.



[Table/Fig-2]: A gross cut section of a specimen shows a splenic hydatid cyst.



[Table/Fig-3]: Microphotograph of hydatid cyst (10x H&E stain)



[Table/Fig-4]: Microphotograph of hydatid cyst (40x H&E stain)

## DISCUSSION

Hydatid disease is a zoonotic disease caused by *E. granulosus* [1]. Hydatid cyst commonly affects the liver with incidence of 50% to 75%, followed by lung with a 5% to 25% incidence [2-4]. Isolated splenic involvement is rare with world wide incidence of 0.5-4% [4]. In India, in central part, the incidence is highest amounting to 2.5% [5].

The mechanism of primary splenic involvement is either through the splenic artery after bypassing the lung and liver or through the splenic vein by retrograde involvement [4]. Hydatid disease is more common in sheep-grazing area. Man and sheep are intermediate host where as dog is definitive host. After ingestion of egg, larva released from egg penetrate bowel mucosa to get access to portal circulation and spread to other organs [6]. The patient may be asymptomatic for long time or present with non specific dull aching left hypochondriac pain or mass, hypersplenism, dyspepsia heart burn, constipation and left sided portal hypertension rupture or fistula formation to colon [4-7].

Preoperatively, serological test like Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA), Immunoelectrophoresis (90-95% sensitivity), and indirect hemagglutination test (85% sensitivity) when used with radiological imaging techniques can give diagnosis of splenic hydatid in 90% of the cases [4]. Arc 5 capron on electrophoresis is most reliable test for diagnosis of hydatidosis [8].

Differentials for left hypochondriac pain and mass are splenic abscess, hydatid cyst, epidermoid cyst, hematoma, pseudocyst, neoplasm. The cyst was anechoic in nature so, could be either a parasitic cyst (most common hydatid) or non parasitic like an epidermoid cyst or a pseudocyst (majority have history of trauma).

USG is a primary investigation with a sensitivity of approximately 90-95% that is not specific but useful in detecting daughter cysts. USG findings are that of benign cyst. It may be mistaken for an abscess or neoplasm due to mixed echogenicity. Some classical signs seen on USG are snake/serpentine sign, spin/whirl sign, double line sign, and water lily sign [4]. Due to mixed echogenicity of the membrane, scolices and hydatid sand, sonography shows higher echogenic pattern due to large acoustic impedance difference between the intracystic contents [8]. If egg shell calcification is seen on plain radiography in left hypochondriac region, it can indicate splenic hydatidosis [5].

CT has higher sensitivity than ultrasound and is useful for the determination of the size, number, and location of cysts [5]. CT attenuation depends upon intracystic contents. HRCT attenuation values are seen when there is presence of intracystic debris, hydatid sand, inflammatory cells and non scan [8].

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is important imaging technique for diagnosis and evaluation of hydatid disease. Patients with proved or suspected hydatid cyst MRI is not mandatory and not used as the first investigation in all cases of splenic hydatid cyst. Recently, for diagnosis and evaluation of focal splenic disease, CECT and USG are investigations of choice [4,8,9].

A combination of medical and surgical line of management is applied to treat human hydatidosis. In medical, line of treatment drugs used have parasitostatic action and not parasitocidal results in low cure rate [5]. In surgery, open and laproscopic approach are employed. When there is small sized and superficial located cyst without any complication laproscopic surgery is predefined. Though success rate of laparoscopy and open surgery are similar but if cyst are multiple, large in size, located deep in organ, infected or ruptured open surgery is choice [10].

Due to the risk of spontaneous or traumatic rupture of the cyst leading to anaphylaxis, splenectomy is preferred in cases with large hydatid cyst as, splenic parenchyma is reduced significantly due to pressure atrophy. Splenectomy is associated with gastrointestinal complications like fistula formation to adjacent organs, rupture into the peritoneal cavity, and upper or lower gastrointestinal bleeding, gastric injury. Other complications include hemorrhage, pancreatitis, secondary infection, anaphylaxis and OPSI [9].

To decrease the chances of OPSI infections, patients are vaccinated for the same before undergoing surgery when posted electively. Though surgery cures the disease and is the treatment of choice in isolated splenic hydatid cyst, secondary *Echinococcus* occurs in 2-21% of cases due to spillage. Recurrence is not seen after complete resection of intact cyst [10].

World Health Organization recommends one month prior or four days preoperatively treatment of tablet albendazole to reduce intraoperative and postoperative complications [10]. Patient to be monitored for at least 3 years postsurgery and patients who are managed with medical line of treatment with USG every 6 monthly [10-12]. [Table/Fig-5] shows the findings of few similar published cases from the literature.

Author	Year	Number of cases	Clinical findings/symptoms	Radiological	Plan
Kumar P et al., [6]	2016	1	Suggestive of peptic ulcer disease in left hypochondriac region	Suggestive of hydatid cysts.	Laparoscopic splenectomy
Vezakis A et al., [13]	2012	2	Abdominal pain with palpable abdominal mass.	Ultrasound suggested enlarged spleen. Abdominal CT showed a splenic calcified hydatid cyst.	1 case laparoscopic splenectomy 1 case open splenectomy
Malik AA et al., [3]	2011	8	-	-	Splenectomy

Hepgul G et al., [14]	2010	1	-	-	Splenectomy
Karakaya K [15]	2007	2	-	-	Splenectomy
Durgun V et al., [16]	2003	14	-	-	Splenectomy
Gharaibeh KI	2001	1	Left upper quadrant heaviness. On examination the splenomegaly present.	All investigation were suggestive of the lower pole lesion in spleen.	Laparoscopic splenectomy.
Safioleas M et al., [18]	1997	14	-	-	Open splenectomy
Aruna et al., [19]	2021	1	Abdominal pain, fever and left upper quadrant swelling	CECT showed liver and spleen hydatid cyst with pericystic fluid suggest rupture.	Enucleation of hydatid cyst with omentopexy with drainage of residual cavity.

[Table/Fig-5]: Cases reports/series of isolated splenic hydatid cyst

## CONCLUSION(S)

An adequate preoperative preparation and a meticulous surgical technique is required to prevent spillage of contents and to prevent anaphylaxis. Elective splenectomy should be done after completion of vaccination to prevent OPSI. In postoperative period, it is absolutely essential to continue antihelminthic therapy.

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### PLAGIARISM CHECKING METHODS: [Jain H et al.]

- Plagiarism X-checker: Apr 26, 2022
- Manual Googling: Jun 28, 2022
- iThenticate Software: Sep 19, 2022 (17%)

### ETYMOLOGY: Author Origin

### AUTHOR DECLARATION:

- Financial or Other Competing Interests: None
- Was informed consent obtained from the subjects involved in the study? Yes
- For any images presented appropriate consent has been obtained from the subjects. Yes

Date of Submission: **Mar 29, 2022**

Date of Peer Review: **May 26, 2022**

Date of Acceptance: **Jul 07, 2022**

Date of Publishing: **Jan 01, 2023**