LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Timing and Mode of Surgery for Inflammatory Omental Cyst Questioned
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Sir,
It was interesting to read the article “Inflammatory Omental Cyst Adjacent to the Transverse Colon Mimicking Appendicitis in an Adult Patient” by Lin et al.\(^1\) Omental cyst is indeed a rare entity (1/140,000 general hospital admissions), which might arise from abnormal development of lymphatic channels inside the omentum.\(^2\) Its presurgical diagnosis would be extremely difficult without modern imaging techniques such as ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging. However, there are several questions and major concerns about the management of this particular patient.

1. “…due to the operator’s misinterpretation of the abdominal CT scan, acute appendicitis with abscess formation was suspected preoperatively.”\(^1\) However, the CT findings presented in the article demonstrated clearly that the fluid-filled mass was separated easily from the surrounding structures. There was no mention of the reading and interpretation of these CT findings by a radiologist. Therefore, unfortunately, the role of the radiologist in the diagnosis of this patient was missing.

2. Within the present-day surgical profession, it is still debatable whether it is necessary to carry out emergency surgery in patients with a possible diagnosis of walled-off periappendiceal abscess.\(^3-5\) However, the current practice seems to favor nonsurgical management first, followed by elective interval appendectomy later, if necessary. In fact, image-guided percutaneous drainage can be accomplished easily in these patients if it is needed during nonsurgical management.

3. Inadequate work-up on this patient resulted in unnecessary, extensive right hemicolectomy, which can have significant physiological consequences, including malabsorption of bile salts and vitamin \(B_12\) that results from removal of the terminal ileum, and possible unwanted morbidity from the surgery itself.

“The treatment of choice is complete excision of the cyst… Omental cyst rarely required a bowel resection….”\(^2\) Quality assurance in surgery depends on sound surgical judgment and excellent technique, to provide a service that is tailored to each patient. Surgeons as a whole have to strive for excellence at all times.

References