Ischemic Colitis Following Screening Colonoscopy in a Patient without Risk Factors

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Background: Ischemic colitis is the most common form of intestinal ischemia. It is a condition commonly seen in the elderly and individuals with risk factors for ischemia. Common predisposing conditions for ischemic colitis are major vascular occlusion, small vessel disorder, shock, some medications, colonic obstructions and hematologic disorders. Ischemic colitis following colonoscopy is rare. Here we report a case of ischemic colitis after a routine screening colonoscopy in a patient without risk factors for ischemia.

Case: A 47-year-old woman with no prior medical history presented to the emergency room complaining of abdominal pain with hematochezia after the 6 hours of routine screening colonoscopy. The screening colonoscopic findings were normal except single colonic polyp in the transverse colon removed by forcep biopsy. It was prepared using 4L split-dose of polyethylene glycol and was not traumatic apparently. On admission, her initial blood pressure was 130/80 mm Hg and heart rate was 70 beats per minute. Initial laboratory data showed elevated WBC 14,000/mm$^3$ and all others were normal including Hb 13.2 g/dL, CRP 0.15 mg/dL. Colonoscopy once again was performed and it showed severe submucosal hemorrhages with edematous mucosal inflammation and linear ulcerations in the ascending colon. Biopsy specimen of the lesion showing mucosal atrophy with erosions and ulcer detritus that was compatible with findings of ischemic colitis. The patient was managed supportively and made an uneventful recovery.

Conclusion: Screening colonoscopy for colorectal cancer is becoming common, the number of people receiving colonoscopy is continuously increasing. It is a relatively safe procedure; most common complications are bleeding and perforation during the procedure and performance-related. We described a rare case of ischemic colitis after a routine screening colonoscopy in a patient without risk factors for ischemia.

Key Words: Ischemic colitis; Colonoscopy