

## IDIOPATHIC RETROPERITONEAL HEMATOMA

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Idiopathic retroperitoneal hematoma is a rare life-threatening problem which is characterized by a sudden onset of bleeding from the splanchnic vessels into the retroperitoneal space. The causes may include rupture of any retroperitoneal organ or aneurysm, or may be the result of coagulopathy disorders. In the minority of cases, no definite cause can be identified. This paper reports a case of idiopathic retroperitoneal hematoma.

### Case Report

A 30-year-old Saudi woman was referred to us from a periphery hospital, where she had presented with hypovolemic shock. There was no history of trauma or anticoagulant treatment, and after initial resuscitation, abdominal and pelvic ultrasound had revealed a large, mixed echogenic mass extending from the pelvis to the left upper abdomen. There was a suspicion of the presence of ovarian tumor, and exploration revealed a huge left retroperitoneal hematoma extending from the pelvis to the splenic area, which was neither expanding nor pulsating. All intra-abdominal organs felt normal. The abdominal aorta and its branches were normal. The patient was then referred to us for further management.

On arrival, the patient was stable. There was a mass felt over the left side of the abdomen. The patient developed ileus, but she recovered from this after a few days. Routine investigations showed WBC to be  $14 \times 10^3/\mu\text{L}$ , Hb 11 g/dL, and normal platelet count, bleeding time, clotting time and INR. Enhanced CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis revealed a huge retroperitoneal hematoma on the left side of the abdomen and extending down to the pelvis. No other abnormality was seen (Figure 1). Angiogram of the abdominal aorta and iliac vessels was normal. The patient was admitted to ICU and treated conservatively under close observation. She improved clinically and radiologically as the size of the hematoma decreased (Figure 2).

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FIGURE 1. CT scan showing a huge retroperitoneal hematoma on the left side of abdomen.

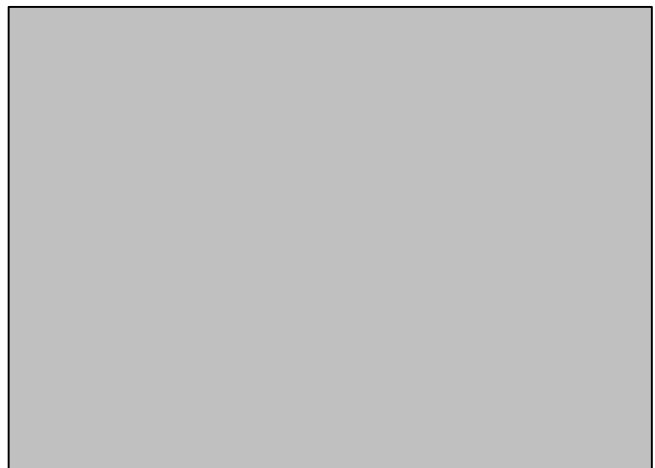


FIGURE 2. Reduction in size of hematoma after conservative treatment.

She was discharged in good condition after staying for six weeks at the hospital.

### Discussion

Idiopathic retroperitoneal hematoma is a rare condition, and few cases have been described in the literature. It was first described by Barber in 1909.<sup>1</sup> In the majority of cases, the cause can be identified, and may be due to trauma, ruptured aneurysm or tumor, or anticoagulant therapy. However, there are cases in which no definite pathology

can be identified, and for which the term “abdominal apoplexy” has been given.<sup>2</sup> Patients usually present with abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Examination usually reveals signs of hypovolemic shock, ileus and tender mass in the abdomen and flank.<sup>3</sup>

CT scan is the principal method of diagnosis. It helps in establishing the site, size and likely underlying cause,<sup>4</sup> and should be performed after an aneurysm has been excluded. The management is by laparotomy and control of hemorrhage from the bleeding point, and when the origin of the bleeding is not found, the prognosis is poor.<sup>5</sup> Our case was treated conservatively after excluding obvious cause by CT scan and angiography.

### References

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