



An unusual cause of abdominal pain

Sagar Nigwekar

A 36-year-old healthy Caucasian female was evaluated for a 1-week history of mild right upper quadrant abdominal pain. On examination, her abdomen was diffusely tender and splenomegaly was present.

Laboratory studies were significant for haemoglobin (17 g/dL). A CAT scan of the abdomen was obtained and is shown below.

The patient was diagnosed with polycythaemia rubra vera.

Figure 1. CAT scan of the abdomen showing portal vein thrombosis (black arrow) and splenomegaly (white arrow)



Discussion

Portal vein thrombosis is a well-described complication of hypercoagulable states, portal pyaemia, and liver diseases such as cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. It is rarely seen in patients with myeloproliferative disorders such as polycythaemia rubra vera (PRV)¹ and a major thrombotic event can be a presenting feature of PRV.

Increased whole blood viscosity is the most likely cause for thrombotic events in patients with PRV.²

Author information: Sagar U Nigwekar, Chief Medical Resident, Department of Internal Medicine, Rochester General Hospital, Rochester, NY, USA

Correspondence: Dr Sagar Nigwekar, Chief Medical Resident, Department of Internal Medicine, Rochester General Hospital, Rochester, NY 14621, USA. Fax: +1 585 9224442; email: sagar.nigwekar@viahealth.org

References:

1. Valla D, Casadevall N, Huisse MG, et al: Etiology of portal vein thrombosis in adults. A prospective evaluation of primary myeloproliferative disorders. *Gastroenterology*. 1988;94:1063–9.
2. Lawrence JH, Berlin, NI, Huff, RL. The nature and treatment of polycythemia; studies on 263 patients. *Medicine (Baltimore)*. 1953;32:323.