A 'Rottie' appendix

Jonathan Paulin, Omid Yassaie

A 4-year-old female was referred by a general practitioner with a 3-day history of central abdominal pain, anorexia, malaise, and dysuria. On examination she was tachycardic, febrile, and peritonitic over the right lower quadrant/suprapubic area. Blood tests were significant for neutrophilia and an elevated C-reactive protein. An ultrasound of the abdomen revealed echogenic free fluid in the right iliac fossa and paracolic gutter. The patient was taken to theatre with suspected appendicitis. On laparoscopy, a perforated appendix was noted with feculent and purulent material throughout the abdominal cavity.

Upon closer inspection of the appendix in-situ, it was noted a distinct black foreign object was protruding with surrounding gangrenous tissue. After removal of the appendix, a short stiff black hair was extracted from the appendix. Further questioning with the family after the operation revealed the young girl had a close relationship with the family pet—a black Rottweiler. We suspect this dog was the source of the incriminating hair causing the perforation. There appears to be one reported previous case of canine hair causing perforation of the appendix, however we believe this is the first documented in-situ evidence of canine hair perforation.1 The girl made a full recovery and was discharged home.

Figure 1: In-situ picture of Rottweiler hair perforating the appendix.

Author information:
Jonathan Paulin, Trainee Intern, University of Otago School of Medicine, Dunedin Public Hospital, Dunedin; Omid Yassaie, Surgical Registrar, Department of Urology, Capital Coast District Health Board, Wellington, New Zealand.

Corresponding author:
Jonathan Paulin, Trainee Intern, University of Otago School of Medicine, Dunedin Public Hospital, Dunedin, New Zealand.
jonopaulin@gmail.com

URL:

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