Rapunzel syndrome

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A 12-year-old girl with mental retardation and cerebral palsy presented with abdominal pain. A contrast-enhanced abdominal CT exam revealed a heterogeneous mass of soft tissue and gas surrounded by enteric contrast and spanning through the lumen of the stomach (Fig. 1), duodenum and proximal jejunum with dilation of the involved small bowel (Fig. 2). Surgical exploration revealed a gastrointestinal obstruction by a large bezoar containing hair.

Types of bezoars include lactobezoars (milk precipitates), trichobezoars (hair) and phytobezoars (vegetable

Fig. 1 Abdominal CT image, stomach

Fig. 2 Abdominal CT image, small bowel

fiber). Trichobezoars are the most common form in older children and adolescents. Rapunzel syndrome is a rare disorder characterized by a trichobezoar extending from the stomach through the small bowel, and is most often observed in young women with mental disorders and trichophagia [1]. In the appropriate clinical setting, the diagnosis can be made by radiographs, barium fluoroscopic studies or CT demonstrating a mottled intraluminal mass composed of hair mixed with air in the stomach and small bowel [2]. If untreated, Rapunzel syndrome can be complicated by bowel obstruction and perforation. Surgery is required for removal of the trichobezoar, unless it is small enough to be amenable to endoscopic extraction.

References

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