

Helicobacter Pylon in Portal Hypertension

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Madam,

A high prevalence of helicobacter pylori (HP) colonization has been found in portal hypertension, especially in those with gastric erosions¹. Alternately congestive gastropathy is also a frequent endoscopic finding in patients with portal hypertension²⁻⁴. Endoscopically it is difficult to differentiate the redness of HP related gastritis from that of portal hypertensive gastropathy but histologically^{3,4} the two conditions are quite distinct and so is their treatment. We studied endoscopic appearances of gastric mucosae in 26 patients with endoscopically confirmed oesophageal varices and took two antral biopsies from each subject to look for HP colonization both on CLO testing and histology. Of 26 portal hypertensives studied (19 cirrhosis and 7 IPH) moderate to severe gastritis was found in 19 cases (73%), while 7 had associated duodenal ulcer. The distribution of gastritis, ulcer and H. pylori in the two groups is shown in the Table.

Table. Endoscopic findings in relation to etiology of portal hypertension.

Etiology	Gastritis		Duodenal ulcer		H. pylori +ve	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Cirrhosis (19)	13	68	7	37	14	74
IPH (7)	6	86	0	-	5	71

All cases with gastritis showed evidence of HP colonization. Five unselected patients were treated with bismuth salts to eradicate HP. Following treatment HP cleared and histology became negative in 3 but their endoscopic findings remained unchanged. Childs grading showed no correlation to gastritis. Present study suggests that gastritis of portal hypertension is not actually due to HP colonization but is secondary to congestion and vascular ectasia³⁻⁵; because although majority of cases showed HP colonization which responded to treatment but endoscopic appearances of the mucosae remained unchanged. Similar findings were reported by McCormick et al⁶.

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