Case Report

A case of primary sclerosing cholangitis mimicking chronic pancreatitis

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Summary

A case of a 37 year old male is presented, who died from primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC) with characteristic radiological picture and laboratory data suggesting chronic pancreatitis (CP).

Introduction

PSC is a rare idiopathic disease, characterised by obliterative inflammatory fibrosis of the biliary tract leading to biliary stenosis. Progression of the process often results in biliary cirrhosis [1]. PSC can occur alone or in association with inflammatory bowel disease, and less commonly with other diseases [2–5]. Rarely, the pancreas may also be involved producing pancreatic fibrosis or CP [4–9].

Case report

A 37 year old Hungarian man was admitted to hospital in February 1985 after a 2 yr period of biliary complaints and progressively increasing epigastric pain, meteorism with loose stools and weight loss (about 12 kg). An exploratory laparotomy was
performed and the diagnosis of pancreatic disease (cancer or chronic pancreatitis) was established, but without histological examination. Some weeks later, in our department endoscopic wirsungography demonstrated segmental narrowing of the pancreatic duct and difficulties in cannulating the papilla because of papillitis and duodenitis (Fig. 1). Diagnosis of postacute pancreatitis was supposed. Medical treatment with spasmolytics and choleretics resulted in an almost symptom free state thus patient was controlled only 6 months later. At admission weight loss was prominent and steatorrhoea progressed. Pancreatic function tests demonstrated severe exocrine insufficiency (Table I) and glucose loading revealed diabetoid pattern of blood glucose levels. Cholostatic enzymes in the serum were elevated and increased even during some days of clinical observation (Table II). On plain film there was no calcification. Despite deep cannulation of the hard, edematous papilla ERCP failed, thus percu-

**TABLE I**

RESULTS OF PANCREATIC FUNCTION TESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Starch tolerance test</th>
<th>Lipiodol test</th>
<th>Lundh test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limits of normal value</td>
<td>&lt; 70%</td>
<td>&gt; 2.8 mEq/24 h</td>
<td>1 abnormal parameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient's results</td>
<td>780%</td>
<td>0.2 mEq/24 h</td>
<td>12 abnormal parameter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>