Primary GI Mucosal Melanoma: A rare etiology of Iron Deficiency Anemia

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Introduction

- Iron deficiency anemia (IDA) is an alarming finding in males and post-menopausal females.
- A myriad of etiologies could be responsible for the anemia.
- In evaluation for possible GI blood loss, bidirectional endoscopy is usually warranted to identify a culprit for the anemia.
- We present a rare etiology of IDA identified on endoscopy in an elderly patient presenting with symptomatic anemia.

Case Presentation

- 89-year-old female with history of atrial fibrillation on apixaban presented with fatigue, weakness, and exertional dyspnea. Patient denied any overt GI bleeding
- Laboratory investigations revealed IDA with a hemoglobin of 8.0 g/dL.
- CT-Angiography of the abdomen revealed a small focus of hemorrhage in the posterior gastric antrum.
- Endoscopy findings were significant for a 3-4 mm raised umbilicated gastric lesion that was biopsied.
- Biopsy revealed the lesion to be mucosal melanoma.
- PET scan for staging showed focal uptake at a distal esophageal lymph node; and focal uptake associated with a loop of small intestine in the left aspect of the pelvis.
- Dermatological, ophthalmological evaluation and a Head CT scan to assess for a primary source, was nonrevealing.
- Video capsule endoscopy revealed 3 small intestinal (likely jejunal) masses (figure 1) with a similar mucosal pattern to the identified gastric lesion.
- Patient was referred to Oncology and eventually underwent 3 rounds of radiotherapy followed by systemic chemotherapy.

Imaging

Figure 1: One of the three small intestinal (Likely Jejunal) masses that had similar mucosal pattern to the previously identified lesion in the stomach. It was identified on Capsule Endoscopy.

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Conclusion

- Malignant melanoma involving the GI tract can be either primary or metastatic.
- Primary GI mucosal melanoma is a rare entity with an annual incidence of 0.58 cases per million, its presentation is variable depending on location of the primary melanoma.
- Our case highlights the importance of performing a thorough endoscopic examination to identify subtle mucosal abnormalities that can aid in establishing an etiology of IDA in patients with occult GI bleeding who are on anticoagulation.
- Evaluation of malignant GI tract melanoma includes evaluation for a possible primary cutaneous source, as well as evaluating for metastatic disease.

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