

Introduction

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is an oncogenic virus typically associated with the development of anal squamous cell carcinoma.
- Its association with the development of glandular lesions, however, is significantly less common.
- In the following report, we describe a case of HPV-associated anal adenocarcinoma.

Initial Presentation

HPI:

- A 59-year-old female with history of anxiety and depression presented to clinic with constipation and intermittent rectal bleeding.
- She reported having worsening constipation over the prior 4 months, occasionally requiring digital disimpaction.
- She never had a prior colonoscopy and reported daily tobacco and occasional alcohol use.
- Family history was significant for colon cancer in her father.

Initial Vitals: Unremarkable

Physical Exam: Unremarkable

Work up and Clinical Course

- An in-office rectal examination revealed a firm mass in the anal canal, and a colonoscopy was performed the next day.
- This revealed a 3 cm mass in the anal canal (Figure 1), with biopsies diagnostic of invasive adenocarcinoma, as well as a high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion (HGSIL).

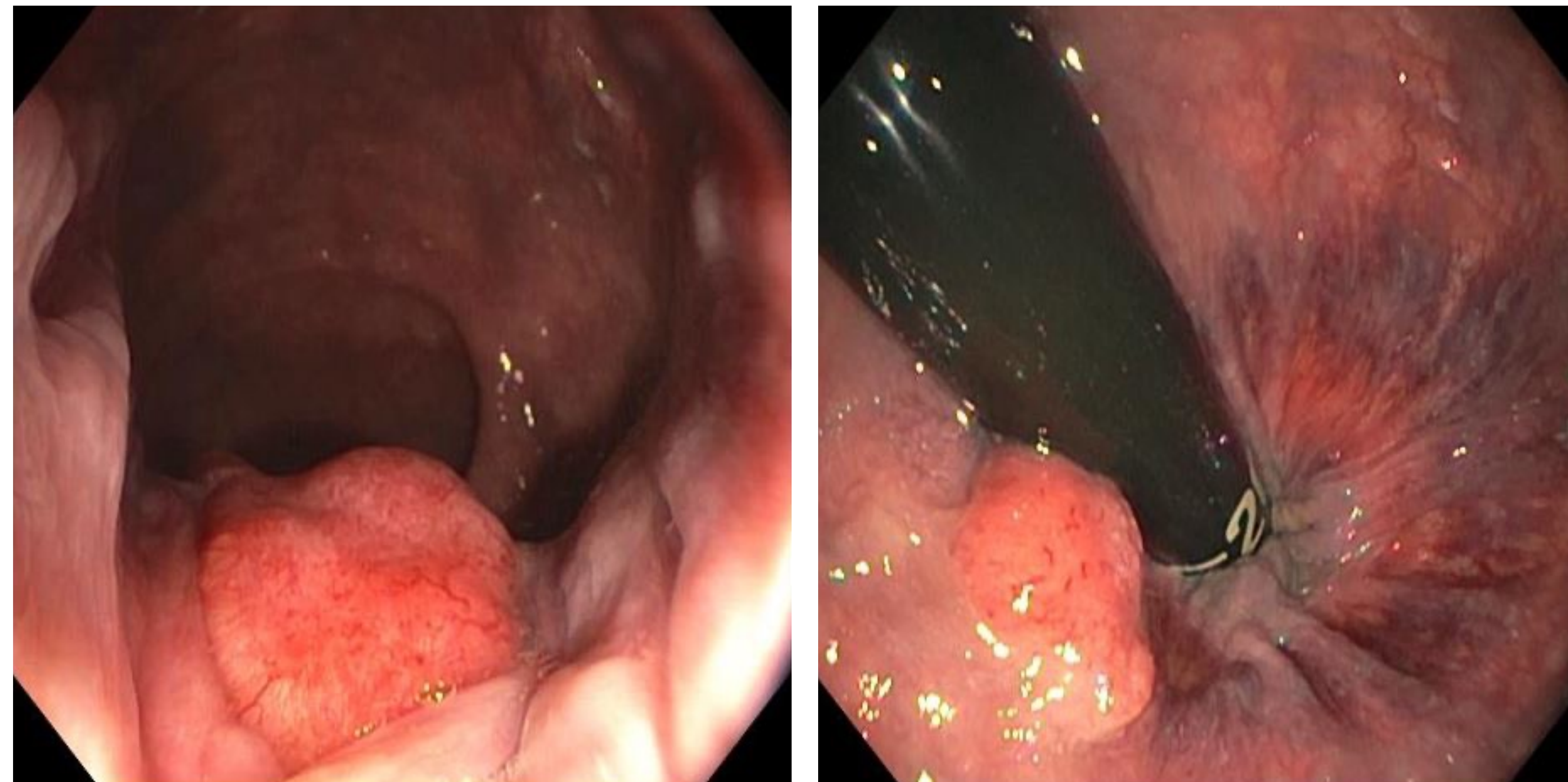


Figure 1: A mass in the anal canal seen in forward view (left) and in retroflexion (right).

- Given the unusual finding of adenocarcinoma histology in the anal canal, as well as the presence of a HGSIL, in situ hybridization testing for HPV was performed and was strongly positive.
- The patient denied a history of sexually transmitted infections or abnormal Pap smear.
- The patient was referred to colorectal surgery and a full thickness excision of the mass was performed which revealed poorly differentiated adenocarcinoma and a focus of high-grade squamous dysplasia. Margins were positive.
- Initial staging CT of the chest, abdomen, and pelvis revealed metastases in the liver only.

- Against medical advice, the patient sought care from a naturopath.
- She returned 6 months later with new onset cephalgia and back pain. Subsequent CT now showed multiple metastatic lesions in the skull, lungs, liver, and spine.
- The patient was offered palliative chemoradiation therapy, but she opted for comfort measures and died shortly thereafter.

Discussion

- Very little is known about anal adenocarcinoma, and reports of cases associated with HPV are exceedingly rare.
- A recent publication reported on 9 cases of HPV related adenocarcinoma of the anogenital tract. Imaging data on presentation was available in 4 cases, including all 3 involving the anorectum. None of these patients presented with metastatic disease as our patient did.
- Our patient's advanced disease may have been due to an aggressive nature of this poorly understood entity, but also due to her reluctance to pursue medical treatment.