

Saddle Pulmonary Embolism in an IBD Patient

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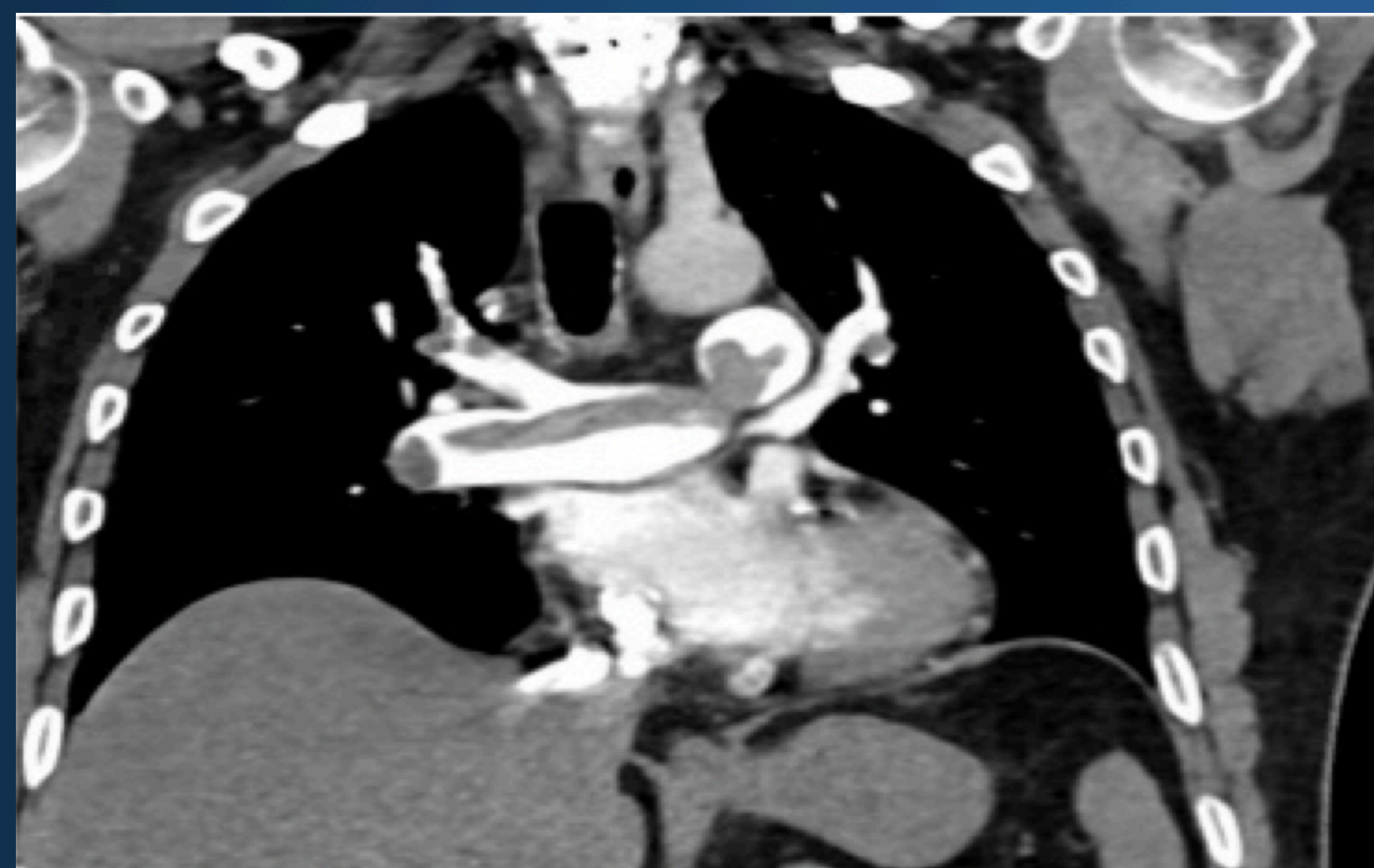
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Introduction

- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) patients are at an eight-fold increased risk for venous thromboembolism (VTE) due to the systemic nature of this disease state.
- VTE in IBD is associated with significant morbidity and mortality.
- Despite this increased risk, adherence to pharmacologic prophylaxis for VTE appears to be low.



Case

A 56-year-old Cuban male with a PMH of ulcerative pancolitis, HTN, and D2M presented to the ED for worsening hematochezia. He reported 6 bloody BM's per day, accompanied by fecal urgency and nocturnal diarrhea. Laboratory studies showed CRP 1.2 mg/dL (ULN of 0.5 mg/dL). Infectious workup was unremarkable. Flexible sigmoidoscopy revealed a diffuse area of moderately friable mucosa, consistent with Mayo 2 activity. Treatment was subsequently initiated with intravenous methylprednisolone and enoxaparin injection for VTE prophylaxis. Over the course of 2 days, the patient improved and was discharged home. As he was leaving the hospital, the patient reported sudden-onset chest pain and a near syncopal episode while standing in the hospital elevator.

Imaging: CTA of the chest demonstrated a large, saddle pulmonary embolism with right heart strain.

Labs: Revealed an elevated BNP and troponin elevation.

He was subsequently admitted to the intensive care unit for catheter-directed thrombolysis and heparin infusion. His respiratory condition improved. He remained hemodynamically stable and was ultimately discharged on apixaban.

Discussion

- This case highlights the importance of VTE prophylaxis in all hospitalized IBD patients.
- Despite receiving VTE prophylaxis, the patient developed a saddle pulmonary embolism with right heart strain on the day of discharge.
- It also begs the question of whether or not IBD patients with high VTE risk would benefit from post-discharge VTE prophylaxis.
- Despite this clear association, VTE prophylaxis is underutilized in this population.

References

- Papa A, Gerardi V, Marzo M, Felice C, Rapaccini GL, Gasbarrini A. Venous thromboembolism in patients with inflammatory bowel disease: focus on prevention and treatment. *World J Gastroenterol.* 2014 Mar 28;20(12):3173-9. doi: 10.3748/wjg.v20.i12.3173. PMID: 24695669; PMCID: PMC3964389.