

The Value of Routine Terminal Ileal Biopsies for the Investigation of Diarrhea

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Abstract : Aims: Diarrhea is a problem that is a frequent clinic referral to the gastroenterology and surgical team from the General practitioner. To establish a diagnosis, these patients undergo colonoscopy. The current practice at our district general hospital is to perform random left and right colonic biopsies. National guidelines issued by the British Society of Gastroenterology advise all patients presenting with chronic diarrhea should have an Ileoscopy as an indicator for colonoscopy completion. Our primary aim was to check if Terminal ileum (TI) biopsy is required to establish a diagnosis of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Methods: Data was collected retrospectively from November 2018 to November 2019. The target population were patients who underwent colonoscopies for diarrhea. Demographic data, endoscopic and histology findings of TI were assessed and analyzed. Results: 140 patients with a mean age of 57 years (19-84) underwent a colonoscopy (M: F; 1:2.3). 92 patients had random colonic biopsies taken and based on the histological results of these, 15 patients (16%) were diagnosed with IBD. The TI was successfully intubated in 40 patients, of which 32 patients had colonic biopsies taken as well. 8 patients did not have a colonic biopsy taken. Macroscopic abnormality in the TI was detected in 5 patients, all of whom were biopsied. Based on histological results of the biopsy, 3 patients (12%) were diagnosed with IBD. These 3 patients (100%) also had colonic biopsies taken simultaneously and showed inflammation. None of the patients had a diagnosis of IBD confirmed on TI intubation alone (where colonic biopsies were not done). None of the patients has a diagnosis of IBD confirmed on TI intubation alone (where colonic biopsies were negative). Conclusion: TI intubation is a highly-skilled, time-consuming procedure with a higher risk of perforation, which as per our study, has little additional diagnostic value in finding IBD for symptoms of diarrhea if colonic biopsies are taken. We propose that diarrhea is a colonic symptom; therefore, colonic biopsies are positive for inflammation if the diarrhea is secondary to IBD. We conclude that all of the IBDs can be diagnosed simply with colonic biopsies.

Keywords : biopsy, colon, IBD, terminal ileum

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