

Enterococcus faecalis infective endocarditis associated with colorectal cancer: A case report

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SOUHRN

Několik studií ukázalo, že infekční endokarditida způsobená bakteriemi kmene *Enterococcus faecalis* je třetím hlavním zdrojem infekční endokarditidy (IE). Kromě toho existuje několik důkazů, které svědčí o vztahu mezi enterokokální IE a kolorektálním karcinomem (CRC). Uvádíme kazuistiku pacienta s infekční endokarditidou způsobenou bakteriemi kmene *Enterococcus faecalis* spojenou s CRC. Jednasedmdesátiletý muž měl horečku, dyspnoe, ortopnoe, kašel, mírnou hemoptýzu, intermitentní rektoragii, bledé spojivky, „jemné praskání“ a typický zvuk umělé chlopně. Byla mu diagnostikována bakteriemie vyvolaná *Enterococcus faecalis* a následně endokarditida. Kolonoskopie byla také provedena a uváděla, že má velký obstrukční maligní vřed v hepatické flexuře. Biopsie odhalila adenokarcinom. Kolorektální chirurgický tým provedl parciální kolektomii. Kromě toho byl pacient léčen s endokarditidou. Je zdůrazněn význam kolonoskopického screeningu u pacientů s infekcí *E. faecalis* a endokarditidou, jehož cílem je vyloučit diagnózu CRC.

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ABSTRACT

Several studies have presented *Enterococcus faecalis* (*E. faecalis*) endocarditis is the third leading source of infective endocarditis (IE). Besides, there have been several evidence in favor of relation between enterococcal IE and colorectal cancer (CRC). We report a patient with *E. faecalis* endocarditis associated with CRC. A 71-year-old male known to have a fever, dyspnea, orthopnea, cough, mild hemoptysis, intermittent rectorrhagea, pale conjunctivae, fine crackle, and typical sound of the artificial valve. He was diagnosed to have *E. faecalis* bacteremia and subsequent endocarditis. Also, colonoscopy was performed for him that reported a large obstructive malignant ulcer at hepatic flexure. The biopsy result was adenocarcinoma. The colorectal surgery team did a partial colectomy. Besides, he was treated for endocarditis. The colonoscopy screening in the patients of *E. faecalis* infection and endocarditis for the rule out of the diagnosis of CRC is emphasized.

Introduction

There are certain documents for the relationship between *Streptococcus bovis* (*S. bovis*), *Enterococcus faecalis* (*E. faecalis*), and *Clostridium septicum* (*C. septicum*) and gastrointestinal (GI) cancers as colorectal cancer (CRC).^{1,2} Generally, Enterococci are emerging as an increasingly important cause of infections in older people and malignancy is one of the most common co-morbidities.³ The current medical practice recommends a colonoscopy to be performed in a patient with *S. bovis*, *E. faecalis*, and *C. septicum* bacteremia.^{3,4}

E. faecalis is a Gram-positive opportunistic pathogen inhabiting the GI tract.⁵ This commensal bacterium can dislocate through the gut and cause systemic infection. In other word, the bowel flora like *E. faecalis* can cause bacteremia due to barrier disintegration following any intestinal lesion.⁶

Even though, *E. faecalis* bacteremia and endocarditis has no identifiable source in most of the cases, but some studies have shown that *E. faecalis* endocarditis is the third leading source of infective endocarditis (IE), which can be seen in more than 10% cases.^{7,8} Besides, there have been several evidence in favor of the relation between enterococcal IE and CRC. Herein, we describe a case of *E. faecalis* endocarditis associated with CRC.

Clinical case

A 71-year-old man presented with fever and weakness. He was a known case of type 2 diabetes mellitus (DM), hyperlipidemia, heart failure, and old cerebrovascular accident (CVA). He developed an extensive myocardial infarction (MI) and severe mitral regurgitation (MR) thirteen years

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ago and underwent mitral valve replacement. Three years ago, he underwent the second valve surgery due to valvular leak and failure. One month ago, he gradually developed dyspnea and weakness that lead to evaluating and finally, blood cultures positive for *E. faecalis* result was obtained. He was treated with ampicillin and amikacin and discharged; however, his weakness and malaise were progressive despite continuing therapy. He was readmitted, due to he had a fever, dyspnea, orthopnea, cough, mild hemoptysis, and intermittent rectorrhagia. His physical examination was notable for low grade fever, pale conjunctivae, fine crackle, and typical sound of artificial valve. The patient's vital signs were stable at admission as follows: BP: 100/70 mm Hg, PR: 99, RR: 20, T: 38 °C. Lab data that was requested showed white blood cell (WBC): 7900 cells/mL³; hemoglobin: 9.2 g/dL; platelet: 191 000 g/dL; creatinine (Cr): 1.4 mg/dL; blood urea nitrogen (BUN): 21 mg/dL; Na: 132 mmol/L; prothrombin time (PT): 24; partial thromboplastin time (PTT): 43; international normalised ratio (INR): 2/7; increased erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR): 70 mm/h; C-reactive protein (CRP): 48 mg/L, and negative blood culture.

Again, an echocardiography was performed that showed moderate paravalvular leak, bilateral mechanical prosthetic valves and a clot in antero-medial of sewing ring (Fig. 1).

So, treatment with ampicillin-sulbactam 12 g IV q24 h in four equally divided doses, and levofloxacin 750 mg orally every 24 hours was started and heart surgery consults requested. Due to his rectorrhagia, anemia, and his prior enterococcal bacteremia, colonoscopy was performed for him that reported a large obstructive malignant ulcer at hepatic flexure (Fig. 2). Biopsy result was adenocarcinoma. Computed tomography (CT) scan of abdomen and pelvis was performed multiple hypodense lesions in the liver compatible with metastasis and pleural effusion (Fig. 3). Also oncology and surgery consult was requested. The colorectal surgery team did a partial colectomy. He was treated for endocarditis with ampicillin 500 mg IV q12h per day and gentamycin 80 mg IM every eight hours.

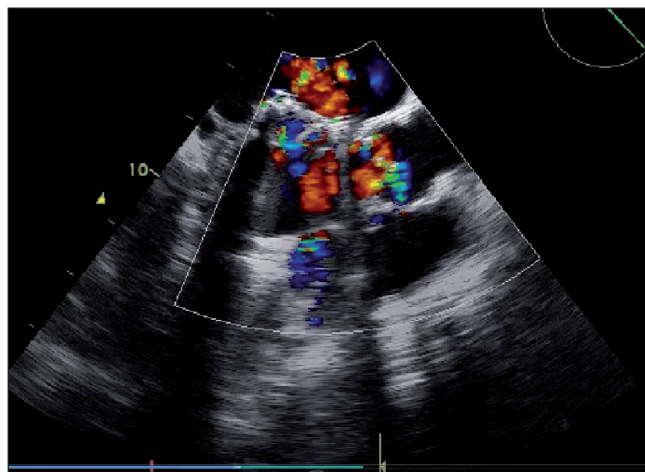


Fig. 1 – Echocardiography showed moderate paravalvular leak, bilateral mechanical prosthetic valves, and a clot in antero-medial of sewing ring.

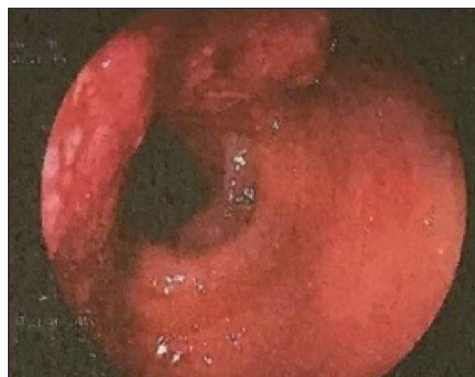


Fig. 2 – Large obstructive malignant ulcer at hepatic flexure.

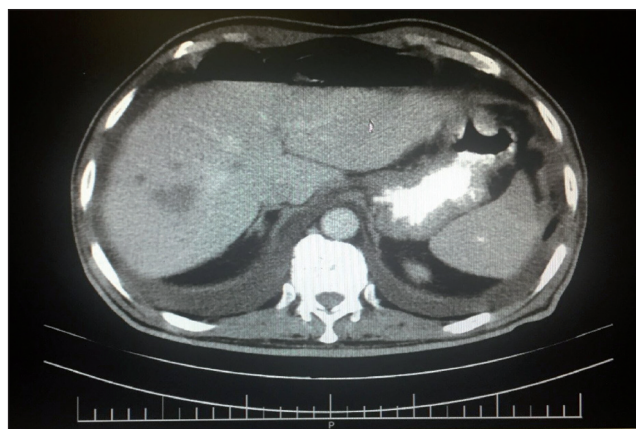


Fig. 3 – Abdominal and pelvic CT showed multiple hypodense lesions in liver compatible with metastasis and pleural effusion.

Discussion

Bacteremia due to bacteria found in the GI tract is commonly caused by increased permeability of the damaged colonic mucosa.⁹ Colonic mucosal damage is the result of infection, ischemic and inflammatory colitis or secondary bleeding in consequence of tumor mucosal invasion. Enterococci are Gram-positive pathogens, facultative anaerobes, non-spore-forming, that are observed under microscopy in pairs.¹⁰ *E. faecalis* as a species of Enterococcus is usual commensals in the intestine of humans. This healthy gut flora is responsible for some diseases through translocation from intestinal wall and resulting in systemic infection.

The most common clinical manifestations of enterococcal endocarditis are fever and malaise like our patient.¹¹ Enterococcal endocarditis may also be presented as heart failure, which was also present in our patient. Our patient had intermittent episodes of rectal bleeding. When colonoscopy was performed, the source of his rectorrhagia was discovered to be an adenocarcinoma of colon. His fever was due to his enterococcal bacteremia probably as a result of translocation of colonic bacteria.

CRC as common cancer in both sexes and the three leading cause of cancer death among adults globally. Some critical risk factors of CRC comprise old age, sex, and a family history of illness.¹² The relationship between some infectious endocarditis as *S. bovis* infective endocarditis and

CRC is documented, although this association about *E. faecalis* endocarditis is not yet fully elucidated.¹³ Even though, in a study; half of cases with *E. faecalis* infective endocarditis with unidentifiable source were found to have colorectal cancer.⁶ Although, the usual distinguishable source of *E. faecalis* bacteremia is related to urinary tract infection (UTI), in the current case, there is no evidence for this link. Also, the patients with *E. faecalis* IE most commonly have no detectable source of bacteremia.⁷ In our case, the relationship between CRC and enterococcal bacteremia is well established, but the colonoscopy was done because of anemia and rectal bleeding to look for malignancy, and it was not intended to find the source of bacteremia. Moreover, our patient's age that was above 50 years necessitated colonoscopy as a screening procedure.

Conclusion

It is recommended to perform endoscopy in the cases with unknown source of *E. faecalis* bacteremia and endocarditis irrespective of age conditions. As soon as the cancer is diagnosed, surgical and oncotherapy is performed earlier.

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Conflict of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical statement

Authors state that the research was conducted according to ethical standards.

Informed consent

Patient's informed consent was obtained.

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