



UNUSUAL COMPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL HERBAL MEDICINE FOR HEMORRHOIDAL DISEASE - OESOPHAGUS FOREIGN BODY: CASE REPORT

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Hemoroidal Hastalığın Geleneksel Bitkisel Tedavisinde Nadir Komplikasyon-Özefagusta Yabancı Cisim: Vaka Sunumu

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ABSTRACT

All over the world, herbal treatments have been attracting attention as modern medicine. Careless use of herbal medicines can lead to various complications. Hemorrhoids that plagued humankind since ancient times and is a disease that disrupts people's quality of life. We present a 41-year-old woman who had of an unusual esophageal foreign body, terminalia chebula seeds, used for traditional Chinese herbal treatment for hemorrhoidal disease and successfully removed using endoscopy. This case is intended to emphasize the complications resulting from the use of herbal medicines. Patients should be informed about all its results.

Keywords: esophageal foreign body, herbal treatment, hemorrhoid

ÖZET

Tüm dünyada bitkilerle tedavi, modern tıp kadar ilgi çekmektedir. Bitkisel ilaçların dikkatsiz kullanımı ciddi komplikasyonlara yol açabilir. Hemoroid antik çağlardan beri insanlara problem olmuştur, hastalıkları insanların yaşam kalitesini bozmuştur. Bu yazıda 41 yaşında kadın hastada nadir görülen özefagusta yabancı cisim olgusunu, Çin tıbbında hemoroid hastalığının bitkisel tedavisinde kullanılan terminalia chebula tohumlarının endoskopik olarak çıkartılmasını sunuyoruz. Bu olgu ile bitkisel ilaç kullanımı sonucu oluşan komplikasyonların vurgulanması amaçlanmıştır. Hastalar bu durum hakkında bilgilendirilmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özefagusta yabancı cisim, bitkisel tedavi, hemoroid

INTRODUCTION

Hemorrhoidal disease is one of the common diseases widely seen in society (1).The fear of having an operation and privacy issues cause patients to have a tendency towards using traditional herbal medicine.

When these medical treatments not applied properly, may cause some complications (2,3). Terminalia chebula extract are various forms of laxative, astringent, purgative, diuretic, antioxidant, antimicrobial, for antidiabetic and antimutagenic activities were implemented as traditional medicines (4). 700 herbal remedies used by traditional Chinese practitioners have been tested on the 100 and has been found effective by the standards of Western science. National Institutes of Health, Office of Alternative Medicine and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), including several US agencies are currently investigating the Chinese herbal medicine. In this case, we aim to present the term "oesophageal foreign body", which is developed by the use of terminalia chebula for the treatment of hemorrhoids. Informed confirmation of the patient was obtained. Also, personal identity was not mentioned in this report.

CASE PRESENTATION

The female patient, who is 41 years old, applied to our emergency service in the second hour with dysphagia and shortness of breath after trying to swallow a whole seed of terminalia chebula. She had got information about terminalia chebula using in hemorrhoidal disease from the websites. Then she had provided the herb from a herbalist. Her vital signs were stable and there were no unusual findings according to direct radiography. In addition, the results of gastroscopy showed that there were two terminalia chebula seeds in her upper and middle parts of oesophagus (Figure 1, 2). The upper seed was removed with a for-

ceps, and the seed which is in the middle was pushed forward towards her stomach. There were no complications during the endoscopy. In the 6th hour, the patient's oral food and liquid intake was normal and she was discharged from the hospital after her medical prescription for hemorrhoids was given to her.



Figure 1: Terminalia chebula seeds in upper part of esophagus

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Figure 2: Terminalia chebula seed removed during endoscopy

DISCUSSION

Information about anal diseases was found on the Egyptian papyrus which was left from BC 1700-1500. Because of this surgical and medical treatment methods have been used for the treatment of hemorrhoids for thousands of years. However the treatment modality of hemorrhoidal disease is still controversial (1).

There is a study which was carried out about whether the herbal formulas which were used in traditional Chinese medicine stopping hemorrhoidal bleeding but it do not give any strong proof because of unmeaningful statistical result. Limited, weak evidence showed that, some herbal formulas may ease some symptoms of hemorrhoids (2). While using herbal formulas safety of the patients should be the main principle. However, patients and consumers infer from the expression "natural product" that using this product is safe, harmless and without risks. The herbal formulas which have toxic effects may contain heavy metals and unidentified pharmacological agents resulting drug interactions and indirect risks, as seen in our case (3). Herbs have been used until today for medical treatments since the first periods of the human history. Terminalia chebula has been named as "The Medicine of Kings" in Tibet. It is one of the most-commonly used herbs in Ayurvedic medicine and it is widely grown in Southern Asia, India, Nepal, China, Malaysia and Vietnam. Terminalia chebula have so much main pharmacological effects including antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, antidiabetic, antineoplastic, wound-healing, inflammation-inhibitor, anti-allergenic, gastrointestinal motility-enhancer, cholesterol lowering (4).

In Ayurvedic medicine and Eastern medicinal practice, terminalia chebula extracts have been used in different formulas with different names. In some studies on a small number, it was reported that formulas containing terminal chebula succeeded. Terminalia chebula formula helps in shrinking hemorrhoidal mass (5,6).

It has been discovered that the "haritaki" mixture, which is prepared according to the principles of Ayurvedic medicine, has an anti-inflammatory effect on the hemorrhoids types created in rats, and it is useful as edema resolvent. Terminalia chebula leaves bark and fruit due to the presence of phenolic showed high antioxidant activity, Terminalia chebula exhibited xanthine oxidase inhibition, 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) radicals scavenging activity terminal chebula the purgative effects have been reported (7).

In the herbalist shops in our country, products including terminalia chebula (which have not been approved by the Ministry of Health) are sold under the title of food product as supplementary food. In media it is advertised that different mixtures of dried terminalia chebula and olive oil/honey can be prepared and used at homes. There are legal loopholes in the supervision of herbal medicine in our country. So some organizations are using these loopholes to achieve substantial gains. On the other hand a patients can easily reach the herbal and use it unconsciously without prescription. The control system on herbal supplementary medicines in developing countries are still not well.

These herbal medicine supplements may have mortal complications generally due to its drug reactions. But in our case we encountered with a very rare condition. A seed of this herb was stucked in upper gastrointestinal system. It was a very rare complication of these herbs. We excised it via endoscopically. In the literature esophageal foreign

bodies are more widely-seen in children, mentally-retarded patients and people who have dementia or psychiatric disorders. Coins, batteries, parts of toys, needles, food pieces, chicken bone, fishbone, and dental prostheses are the most-widely detected foreign bodies (8). The foreign bodies which are stucked in anatomically-narrow areas are most-often detected in upper esophagus as in our patient. Patients generally complain about throat pain, coughing, nausea, dyspnea and dysphagia (8,9). Endoscopy is sufficient as treatment at the rate of 10-20% and surgical intervention is necessary at the rate of 1% (8). Today, both general anesthesia and flexible endoscopy performed under sedation, in experienced hands, it is considered to be safe and effective. We retract the foreign bodies under sedation with flexible endoscopy and forceps.

Throughout the human history, herbs have been used in order to prevent or treat illnesses. Today, despite the scientific studies which improve at an unprecedented pace in modern medicine and in the field of molecular-genetic science, it is impossible to totally reject the use of traditional medicine. However, patients should be informed about a wide range of complications including death, as in our case.

Especially in developing countries, supplementary herbal medicine should be under the control of great discipline by government. Otherwise undesired results will be seen. To overcome these results, we should educate the people and inform them by media alerts.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest