

Atypical Presentation Of Flexor Tendon Sheath Ganglion

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Introduction

Ganglion cyst over the finger flexor tendon sheath is rare and about 20% of them present with trigger finger¹. This rare presentation affects patients' hand functions and may require surgical intervention. There is no consensus on its gold standard treatment but cyst aspiration with steroid injection and surgical excision are widely acceptable. Needle aspiration risks neurovascular injury and recurrence whereas excisional biopsy risks incisional tenderness².

Report

A 67-year-old lady with ischaemic heart disease presented with an enlarging swelling over the volar surface of right middle finger proximal phalanx over 4 months. It is associated with a grade 3 trigger finger with no preceding trauma. Clinical examination showed a 1cm x 1cm non-tender and soft swelling over the right middle finger (Fig.1). Ultrasound (Fig.2) showed a well-encapsulated peritendonous anechoic swelling between the subcutaneous tissue and flexor tendon. We proceeded with an excisional biopsy under wide awake local anaesthesia no tourniquet (WALANT) technique. We identified a cystic swelling arising between A2 and A3 pulleys (Fig.4) close to the neurovascular bundle which was excised with a surrounding 1-2mm margin. Clinic follow-ups revealed a complete flexion range of movement with no more triggering and histopathology confirmed a mucin-filled synovial cyst.

Conclusion

Trigger finger secondary to flexor tendon sheath ganglion is an atypical presentation and it can affect one's hand function. Surgical excision is an effective treatment method as it has less post-operative morbidity compared to needle aspiration. WALANT technique provides a comparable operating field and painless operation for the patient despite the longer preparation time.



Fig.1 shows right middle finger swelling and trigger finger.

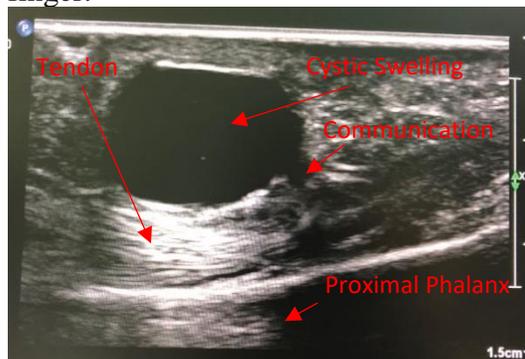


Fig.2 Ultrasound showing cystic swelling communicating with tendon sheath.

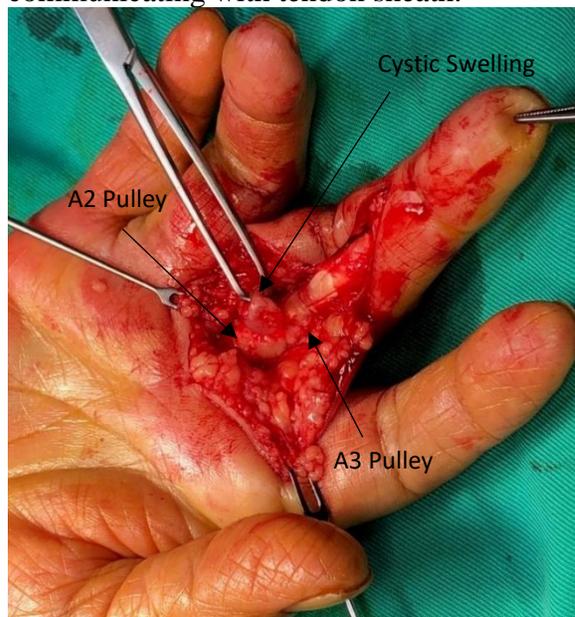


Fig.3 Tendon sheath ganglion arising between A2 and A3 pulleys.

References

1. Peter et al. Flexor tendon sheath ganglions: Results of surgical excision. *Journal of Hand*. 2007;2:94-100
2. Korman J, Pearl R, Hentz VR. Efficacy of immobilization following aspiration of carpal and digital ganglions. *J Hand Surg[Am]* 1992;17:1097-9