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RESEARCH ARTICLE

FOREIGN BODIES IN OESOPHAGUS IN CHILDREN: OUR EXPERIENCE IN A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

Dr. Shakil Ahmed^{1,*}, Dr. Zahida Choudhary², Dr. Shokia Jehav Ul Nesa³ and Dr. Rahil Muzaffer⁴

¹Medical Officer (M.S. ENT), Health & Family Welfare Department, J&K

²PG Department of Ophthalmology, GMC Jammu, J&K

³Medical Officer, Health & Family Welfare Department, J&K

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of ENT, GMC Doda, J&K

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ABSTRACT

A Foreign body is an object or substance foreign to the location where it is found. Foreign body ingestion is a common occurrence and carries significant morbidity. The increased incidence of swallowing foreign bodies in children could be due to their natural propensity to gain knowledge by putting things in their mouth, inability to masticate well and inadequate control of deglutition as well as tendency to cry, cough or play during eating. The most common foreign body seen was coin (70%), followed by metallic foreign body (13.33%), and meat bone (10%). Others were battery and vegetative foreign body. In our study, foreign bodies were more common in <4 years of age (60%), followed by 5-8 years of age (30%). There were no complications seen in our study.

INTRODUCTION

A Foreign body is an object or substance foreign to the location where it is found. Foreign body ingestion is a common occurrence and carries significant morbidity (Adhikari, 2007). The increased incidence of swallowing foreign bodies in children could be due to their natural propensity to gain knowledge by putting things in their mouth, inability to masticate well and inadequate control of deglutition as well as tendency to cry, cough or play during eating. The habit of children putting things in the mouth makes them more susceptible to accidental ingestion. The most frequently swallowed foreign body in children includes coin, metallic foreign bodies (parts of playing objects) (Nandi, 1978; Guitron, 1996; Yang, 1991; Nayak, 1984). The peak age in children is between six months to three years (Brown, 1983). Failure to treat foreign bodies immediately can cause complications like retropharyngeal abscess, perforation, oesophago-respiratory fistula, stricture formation and pneumonitis.

Aims of Study: To identify the different types of foreign body ingested and most commonly involved age group in children.

*Corresponding author: Dr. Shakil Ahmed,
Senior Resident, Department of ENT, SHKM GMC NUH, Haryana.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a prospective study of 90 patients done in ENT department of SHKM GMC, NUH, HARYANA, INDIA (A Tertiary care hospital) for a period of one year in between April 2018 to March 2019. Children less than 12 years of age were included. The ethics of the study were reviewed and approved. In all cases, x-ray soft tissue neck (lateral view) and chest x-ray (PA view) were done along with other preoperative investigations. Rigid oesophagoscopy or hypopharyngoscopy were done under general anesthesia to remove foreign bodies.

RESULTS

The most common foreign body seen was coin (70%), followed by metallic foreign body (13.33%), and meat bone (10%). Others were battery and vegetative foreign body. In our study, foreign bodies were more common in <4 years of age (60%), followed by 5-8 years of age (30%). There were no complications seen in our study.

DISCUSSION

Foreign body ingestion is a common problem. Most commonly, it is seen in small children. The peak age group involved is between 6 months to 3 years of age. In our study,

Table 1. Age and Distribution of Foreign Bodies in children

Age group	Total no. (%)
<4 years	54 (60 %)
5-8 years	27 (30%)
9-12 years	9 (10%)

Table 2. Types of Foreign Bodies

Types	Numbers (%)
Coin	63 (70 %)
Metallic Foreign body	12 (13.33 %)
Meat bone	9 (10%)
Battery	4 (4.44 %)
Vegetative Foreign Body	2 (2.22 %)

the most commonly involved age group was < 4 years of age. Most common foreign bodies in pediatric age group are coins, but metallic objects, meat bone, marbles, batteries are also reported (Hansen, 1994; Giordano, 1981; Morales Angulo, 1998). Our study also showed coins to be the most common foreign body in children followed by metallic objects and meat bone which was in accordance with the study done by Adhikari et al. Removal of foreign body is not an easy task. The majority of ingested foreign bodies pass spontaneously but serious complications such as bowel perforation and obstruction can also occur. In our study, rigid oesophagoscopy or hypopharyngoscopy was done to remove foreign bodies. Cricopharyngeal and oesophageal foreign bodies are potentially hazardous and may pose problems regarding their diagnosis and management.

Conclusion

Most common foreign bodies in children are coin. Though complications with these foreign bodies are rare, these do occur due to delay in presentation and removal.

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