

Spontaneous rupture of malarial spleen: two case reports and review of literature

ABSTRACT

Malaria has long been among the most common diseases in the southeast Anatolia region of Turkey. In 1992, 18676 cases were diagnosed in Turkey, and Diyarbakir city had the highest incidence (4168 cases), followed by SanliUrfa city (3578 cases). Malaria was especially common during 1994 and 1995, with 84 345 and 82 094 cases being diagnosed in these years, respectively. Spontaneous rupture of malarial spleen is rare. We saw two cases during 1998, which are reported herein. Both patients were male, and were receiving chloroquine treatment for an acute attack of malaria. One of the patients had developed abdominal pain and palpitations, followed by fainting. The other patient had abdominal pain and fever. Explorative laparotomy revealed an enlarged spleen in both patients. Splenectomy was performed in both patients. We have identified 15 episodes of spontaneous rupture of the spleen in the English language literature published since 1961. Because of increased travel to endemic areas and resistance to antimalarial drugs, malaria is a major medical problem that is becoming increasingly important to surgeons worldwide. Malaria is a particularly important problem in the southeast Anatolia region of Turkey. Prophylactic precautions should be taken by tourists who travel to this region, especially during the summer.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction Involvement of the spleen in malaria that results in splenomegaly renders this organ prone to complications such as rupture. In areas where malaria is endemic, spontaneous rupture of spleen is uncommon. Because of increased travel to endemic areas and resistance to anti-malarial drugs, however, malaria is a major medical problem, which is becoming increasingly important to surgeons worldwide. During the 1980s and 1990s in the USA, the annual number of diagnosed cases of malaria rose by twofold to fourfold that of the preceding decade. We report two cases of spontaneous rupture of malarial spleen treated with splenectomy.

CONCLUSION

Changes in the structure of the spleen during the course of malaria can result in asymptomatic enlargement or complications such as haematoma formation and rupture. Primary exposure to malaria and infection with *P vivax* appear to be important factors in spontaneous rupture of the spleen. Malaria is still important in the southeast Anatolia region of Turkey. Prophylactic measures should be taken by tourists who travel to this region, especially those who do so during the summer.