# A case report of duodenal and enteric perforation in a single patient

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#### European Journal of Medical Case Reports

Volume 4(8):263–265 © EJMCR. https://www.ejmcr.com/ Reprints and permissions: https://www.discoverpublish.com/ https://doi.org/10.24911/ejmcr/ 173-1589913065

# ABSTRACT

**Background:** The presence of two hollow viscus perforations in a single patient is a rare entity and no case report is available in the literature which shows the finding of duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation in the same patient.

**Case presentation:** A 55-year-old male presented in the emergency department of East Surgical Ward of Mayo Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan, in January 2020 with complaint of abdominal pain and vomiting for the past 3 days and fever for the past 5 days. He was a chronic smoker with a history of 10 pack-years. On examination, he had tachycardia with a pulse rate of 114 beats/minutes and respiratory rate was 30/minutes and his whole abdomen was guarding with absent bowel sounds. X-ray of the chest showed free gas under the right hemidiaphragm. The patient was resuscitated and plan of exploration was made with diagnosis of perforated duodenal ulcer. We found a  $0.5 \times 0.5$  cm perforation on the anterior surface of the first part of the duodenum along with a 1  $\times$  1 cm perforation on antimesenteric surface of ileum that is 1 feet proximal to ileocolic junction. Graham's patch repair was carried out for duodenal perforation, while loop ileostomy was made for ileal perforation. The patient was discharged on the 5th postoperative day. The reversal of loop ileostomy was carried out after 2 months.

**Conclusion:** In cases of peritonitis, general inspection of the whole gastrointestinal tract plays a very important role as more than one hollow viscus perforation can be found in a single patient which can be missed and can lead to peritonitis again.

Keywords: Case report, perforation, duodenal, enteric.

Received: 22 May 2020 Type of Article: CASE REPORT	Accepted: 11 July 2020 Specialty: General Surgery/ Gastroenterology	<b>Correspondence to:</b> Ahmed Siddique Ammar *Senior Registrar, General Surgery, MAYO Hospital, Lahore Pakistan. <b>Email:</b> asammar1912@gmail.com <i>Full list of author information is available at the end of the article.</i>
Funding: None.		
Declaration of conflicting interests no conflict of interest regarding the		

# Background

The most common cause of peritonitis is hollow viscus perforation. It is estimated that the gastrointestinal perforations are the third most common cause of exploratory laparotomy in the emergency department. In the early 20th century, mortality due to secondary peritonitis was as high as 90% and despite advances in antibiotics, surgical techniques, radio graphical imaging, and resuscitation therapy, the mortality rate is still 30%-50% [1]. In developing countries, the two most common causes of secondary peritonitis are small bowel perforations which includes enteric perforation, tuberculosis stricture perforation, and gastroduodenal perforations [2]. The important factor which leads to the development of peptic ulcer is the presence of the microorganism Helicobacter pylori in the stomach and duodenum, and also smoking and consumption of non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). H. pylori is more prevalent in developing countries like Pakistan. Duodenal ulcer perforations are more common than gastric ulcer perforations, and the estimated incidence of these perforations were 5:1 in Pakistan and 32:1 in India [3]. On the other hand, typhoid fever is a life-threatening problem in Pakistan, especially due to the emergence of multiresistant strains of Salmonella typhi, and intestinal perforation is the most dangerous complication of typhoid fever. The presence of multiple perforations in same part of gastrointestinal tract is documented in the literature. Isolated multiple perforations are found in the ileum, jejunum, or even in the stomach. But still there is no case reported in the literature in which there is duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation co-existing in the same patient [4].

In this case report, we present a case of a male patient who presented in the emergency department with signs and symptoms of peritonitis, and on examination, it was found that he had two gastrointestinal tract perforations, one in the first part of the duodenum and second in the ileum that is 1 feet proximal to the ileocolic junction.

## **Case presentation**

A 55-year-old male presented in the emergency department of East Surgical Ward of Mayo Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan, in January 2020 with chief complaints of abdominal pain and vomiting since the past 3 days. He also had a history of fever since last 5 days for which he was taking local medications from a Hakeem near his home. He is a laborer by profession and a chronic smoker, with history of 10 pack years (almost 10 cigarettes per day since last 20 years). There was no positive past surgical history. He had two sons and three daughters and belonged to the low socioeconomic status. He experienced epigastric pain 3 days earlier which later became generalized and associated with bilious vomiting two to three times per day. He went to the local doctor who referred him to Mayo Hospital's emergency department. On presentation, he had a Glassgow Coma Scale (GCS) of 15/15, tachycardia with a pulse rate of 114 beats/minutes, blood pressure of 90/70 mmHg, fever of 100°C, and respiratory rate of 30/minutes. On examination, there was a generalized board like rigidity all over the abdomen with dull percussion notes and bowel sounds were absent. Chest X-ray showed free gas under the right hemidiaphragm. Other blood investigations were normal, except Total Leukocyte Count (TLC) which was  $18 \times 10^{9}$ /l. Two wide bore intravenous cannula, nasogastric tube, and Foley catheter were passed and the patient was resuscitated. A single dose of Gram-positive and third-generation antibiotics were given. Diagnosis of perforated duodenal ulcer was made, and the patient was shifted to the operation theater with a plan of exploratory laparotomy after obtaining written informed consent from the patient. Under general anesthesia, the patient was opened via midline umbilical saving incision. On opening the abdomen, there was gush of air with purulent greenish discharge of about 2.5 l. The abdomen was washed with 71 of normal saline. There were dense flakes over all the small intestine. On inspecting the upper abdomen, there was  $0.5 \times 0.5$  cm perforation in the first part of the duodenum in its anterior surface (Figure 1) which was packed with abdominal gauze temporarily. On removing the flakes from the small intestine, we found another perforation of  $1 \times 1$  cm on the antimesenteric surface of the ileum approximately 1 ft proximal to the ileocolic junction (Figure 2). The duodenal perforation was closed by placing a healthy piece of omentum over the perforation and with Vicryl 2-0 sutures. The ileal perforation was exteriorized as loop ileostomy in the right side of the abdomen. The

abdominal drain was placed in the pelvis and the abdomen was closed with Prolene 1 continuous suture. The surgery was uneventful and the patient was shifted to a ward. The patient started oral feed on the 4th postoperative day and abdominal drain was removed on the 5th postoperative day. The patient was sent home on the 7th postoperative day. He was later recalled after 2 months and then reversal of loop ileostomy was carried out under general anesthesia and then he was discharged on the 6th postoperative day.

# Discussion

Peptic ulcer perforation is a collective term for gastric ulcer perforation and duodenal ulcer perforation. Duodenal ulcer perforation is a very common and serious problem, especially in developing countries. Gastric ulcer perforations are rare but mostly malignant, while duodenal ulcer perforation are common but without any malignant tendency [5]. The most common causes of duodenal ulcer perforation is the presence of microorganism *H. pylori* which is reported to be positively present in 90%-95% of the general population, and also in the chronic use of NSAIDs [6].

Enteric perforation, on the other hand, is caused by the microorganism Salmonella typhi which is transmitted through the feco-oral route. It causes fever initially and can cause enteric perforation, as its complications mostly involve the terminal part of the ileum, because of the presence of payer's patches there [7].

Duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation are very common surgical diseases in the IndoPak subcontinent because they usually affect the lower socioeconomic groups with poor hygiene, chronic smoking, and frequent use of over-the-counter painkillers for daily workout body aches [8]. However, the presence of both duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation in a single patient is



Figure 1. 0.5  $\times$  0.5 cm perforation on the anterior surface of first part of the duodenum.



**Figure 2.**  $1 \times 1$  cm perforation in the antimesenteric border of the ileum that is 1 feet proximal to the ileocolic junction.

an extremely rare entity and there is no literature available regarding the presence of this co-existing perforations [9]. This is the reason why in this case preoperatively we had only one diagnosis of duodenal ulcer perforation in mind and exploratory laparotomy was carried out. As the name indicated, we must explore the whole abdomen and inspect every hollow and solid viscous, so that while inspecting the small intestine enteric perforation is found. The preoperative diagnosis of double perforation cannot be made clinically because both perforations elicit same signs and symptoms of peritonitis. Free gas under the right hemidiaphragm and an increase in the total leucocyte count is present in both type of perforations [10]. There are no investigations available that can distinguish both type of perforations; therefore, the diagnosis is made completely through history and complete abdominal examination [11]. Moreover, one has a low threshold of finding both perforations together as almost no literature is available.

# Conclusion

This rare case of finding both duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation is the first of its kind which shows the importance of the immunological process of the body, and once these immunological barriers get reduced, different microorganisms start producing their toxic effects, which ultimately lead to perforation in different parts of the same body simultaneously.

#### What is new?

There is no case report published in this regard which shows both duodenal and enteric perforation in the same patient.

#### **List of Abbreviations**

GCS Glassgow Coma Scale TLC Total Leukocyte Count

#### **Consent for publication**

Written consent was obtained from the patient.

# **Ethical approval**

Ethical approval is not required at our institution to publish an anonymous case report.

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#### Summary of the case

1	Patient (gender, age)	Male, 55-year-old	
2	Final diagnosis	Duodenal ulcer perforation and enteric perforation	
3	Symptoms	Abdominal pain, vomiting, and fever	
4	Medications	Gram-positive and third-generation cephalosporin	
5	Clinical procedure	Graham patch and loop ileostomy	
6	Specialty	General surgery/gastroenterology	