A Rare Case of a Signet Ring Cell Carcinoma of the Colon Mimicking a Juvenile Polyp

Sun Hyung Kang*, Woo Suk Chung†, Chang Lim Hyun‡, Hee Seok Moon§, Eaum Seok Lee§, Seok Hyun Kim§, Jae Kyu Sung§, Byung Seok Lee§, and Hyun Yong Jeong§

*Department of Internal Medicine, Armed Forces Daejeon Hospital, Daejeon, †Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Daejeon, ‡Department of Pathology, Jeju National University Hospital, Jeju, and §Department of Internal Medicine, Chungnam National University Hospital, Daejeon, Korea

Primary signet ring cell carcinoma (SRC) of colon at early stage is quite rare. Only 26 cases were reported until now. We report an early stage of primary SRC which was misdiagnosed as a juvenile polyp and treated with polypectomy followed by surgical resection. A 21-year-old male was administered for hematochezia. Abdominopelvic enhanced computed tomography revealed a polyp with active bleeding at the proximal rectum just below the rectosigmoid junction. Colonoscopy examination revealed a colon polyp with 0.5 cm sized head. Polypectomy was performed with snare and the polyp was completely removed. Biopsy revealed SRC. Surgical resection was also performed and there were no residual tumor or lymph node metastasis in the surgical specimen.

INTRODUCTION

Signet ring cell carcinoma (SRC) in the colon is rare and occurs earlier in life than other types of adenocarcinoma. SRC is usually diagnosed at advanced stages and has a poor prognosis. The gross morphology of SRC is usually scirrhous or ulcerated. We report a case of early stage primary SRC that was initially misdiagnosed as a juvenile polyp and treated with polypectomy followed by surgical resection.

CASE REPORT

A 21-year-old male was admitted to our institution for treatment of hematochezia. The patient had no previous medical history. His vital signs were stable and his hemoglobin level was 13.9 mg/dL. Abdominopelvic enhanced computed tomography (CT) revealed a polyp with active bleeding at the proximal rec-
tum just below the rectosigmoid junction (Fig. 1). Colonoscopy revealed a Yamada type IV colon polyp with a head 0.5 cm in size in the proximal rectum. The head showed erythematous changes and surface erosions, and we therefore assumed that this polyp was the bleeding point. The polyp was initially diagnosed as a juvenile polyp after considering the patient’s age, the gross morphology of the polyp and the history of bleeding. After hypertonic saline epinephrine injection, a snare polypectomy was performed and the polyp was completely removed (Fig. 2). The diagnosis was corrected to SRC after biopsy (Fig. 3). The patient’s cancer was confined to the muscularis mucosa. Angiolymphatic invasion and tumor budding were not observed in the biopsy specimen. The longitudinal safety margin was 0.9 cm, and the lateral safety margin was 0.4 cm. We observed no dysplasia around the lesion. No additional lesions were found on positron emission tomography CT (PET CT) or esophagogastroduodenoscopy. Surgical resection was performed due to the polyp’s poorly differentiated histopathology. There were no residual tumors or lymph node metastasis in the surgical specimen (Fig. 4).

**DISCUSSION**

More than 96% of cases of SRC arise in the stomach, and the rest occur in the colon, rectum, gallbladder, pancreas, urinary bladder, and breast. In the present case, the primary lesion was believed to be the rectum because no other organ involvement was detected by esophagogastroduodenoscopy, abdominal CT or PET CT. An additional surgical resection was performed due to a report indicating that lymph node metastasis often occurs in association with very small SRCs. The surgical specimen was free of lesions. In a previous study of 26 cases of early stage primary colon SRC with a mean age of 57.1 years (range, 6 to 69 years), six cases with mucosal cancer were documented, 16 with flat depressed lesions and 10 with polypoid lesions. SRC of the colon (including the advanced form) comprises about only 1% of all cases of colon cancer. When compared with other types of adenocarcinoma, patients with SRC in the colon are younger, more likely to experience lymph node metastasis and have a poorer prognosis. Colon cancer is rare in children.