

Hiatal Hernia in the Early Second Trimester

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Background

Bariatric surgery is becoming a more widely used approach to manage obesity, with a 36% rise in surgeries between 2010 and 2016. Subsequently, long-term complications, ranging from GERD to hiatal hernias, are also increasing. Hiatal hernias can be devastating, as compression of mediastinal structures can be life-threatening and can often require urgent surgery. Due to the increased intraabdominal pressure caused by the gravid uterus, pregnancy is a significant risk factor for hiatal hernia. The urgent repair that these hernias require can be complicated by pregnancy co-management.

Case

A 33 yo G3P1011 at 21 weeks and 5 days presented with complaints of bilious emesis and epigastric pain. Notably, she had a history of a recent gastric sleeve surgery performed two years prior to her current pregnancy. Her labs indicated dehydration consistent with nausea/vomiting, with no evidence of any other infectious or GI cause. A CT was performed, showing a large hiatal hernia which included the antrum of the stomach, small bowel, SMA, as well as a suspected volvulus of the sleeved portion of the stomach. She was unable to tolerate an NG tube and was maintained on TPN for several weeks. Two weeks into her course, she decompensated. Repeat imaging showed a collapsed left lung, with a rightward mediastinal shift of all organs. Her hiatal hernia now included large bowel, as well as the inferior mesenteric artery. Given worsening maternal status, the patient was transferred to a bariatric referral center where urgent surgical repair was performed.

Conclusion

Given the increasingly younger ages at which bariatric surgery are being performed, more women are becoming pregnant after surgery. Hiatal hernia, therefore, should be considered in the differential in nausea/vomiting of pregnancy in these patients. We should expect to see more long term sequelae, specifically diaphragmatic hernias in pregnancy in the future.