Dense Colon Scarring After Infliximab for Acute Severe Ulcerative Colitis

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Patel, Rahul; Vutukuru, Sriya; Dasu, Neethi; and Snyder, Charles, "Dense Colon Scarring After Infliximab for Acute Severe Ulcerative Colitis" (2024). *Rowan-Virtua Research Day*. 116.  
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**Introduction**

- **Ulcerative colitis:**
  - is a condition characterized by chronic mucosal inflammation of the rectum, colon, and cecum.
  - Can lead to symptoms of bloody diarrhea and abdominal pain.\(^1\)
- **Infliximab** is a monoclonal antibody targeting tumor necrosis factor alpha that is used in the management of ulcerative colitis.\(^2\)
  - Studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in individuals experiencing moderate to severe ulcerative colitis or in those who have not responded to intravenous steroids.\(^3\)
- We present a case where a patient had dense colonic scarring one year post infliximab treatment for acute severe ulcerative colitis.

**Case Presentation**

- **Demographics:** Early 60s Female.
- **Presentation:** 3 months of LLQ abdominal pain, bloody diarrhea & vomiting. Patient had a fever of 100.6°F and an elevated CRP of 43.4 mg/dl.
- **Imaging:** CT and MRI both showed an inflamed colon.
- **Colonoscopy:** Mayo score of 3 & left side colitis, punched-out appearance. Patient was high risk for colectomy.
- **Initial Therapy:** IV methylprednisolone 20 mg/kg with no improvement. She was started on infliximab 5 mg/kg and tapered off of steroids. She improved on infliximab and was safely discharged.

**Initial Colonoscopy**

**After 1 Year of Infliximab Treatment:**

- **Patient had a colonoscopy 1 year later that revealed no active ulcerative colitis and a Mayo score of 0. Patient had scarring where ulcerations were on previous colonoscopy.**

**Discussion**

**Novel Aspects**

- This patient had severe acute ulcerative colitis and was at high risk for early colectomy.
  - Predictors of early colectomy include: young age at diagnosis (<40), extensive disease, severe endoscopic activity (presence of large/deep ulcers), extensive disease, early need for steroids and elevated inflammatory markers.\(^1\)
  - This patient had multiple risk factors and a Mayo score of 3.
  - In the Accent I study, patients who were treated with infliximab had fewer hospitalizations and surgeries.\(^2\)
- Colonoscopy one year later revealed dense scarring of the previous ulcerations.
  - Although infliximab has been established as an effective therapy modality in patients with IBD, its effects on scarring post treatment are less studied.
  - Mucosal healing has been associated with improved outcomes after infliximab treatment.\(^3\)
  - Multiple years of infliximab maintenance therapy have been shown to have promising results and tolerated well by patients.\(^4\)
  - Further research is ongoing on how to prevent fibrosis in inflammatory bowel disease.

References