Biliary Tract Compression Caused by a Giant Abdominal Aneurysm

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A 90-year-old woman with a 12-year history of an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) presented with nausea, appetite loss, and a fever lasting three days. The patient declined surgery or invasive procedures for the AAA. On examination, there was jaundice and a pulsatile mass (8 cm) over the mid-abdomen. Laboratory data showed elevated serum bilirubin and biliary enzyme levels. An enhanced CT scan revealed an AAA of 15-cm in diameter with a thrombus (Picture 1) causing extrahepatic bile duct compression associated with proximal bile duct dilatation (Picture 2). The patient was managed conservatively with antibiotics and pain control. Her symptoms initially improved, but she subsequently developed septic shock and died. An autopsy showed no rupture of the AAA. In the previously reported similar cases in two elderly women, the prominent symptoms of one case were fever and abdominal pain (1), whereas the other case only had liver dysfunction (2). An AAA is a rare but important cause of obstructive jaundice which can be associated with cholangitis.

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References