

Abstract

Lupus mesenteric vasculitis is a rare manifestation of systemic lupus erythematosus and presents with common gastrointestinal symptoms. This case report describes a patient with lupus mesenteric vasculitis presenting with recurrent diarrhoea and abdominal pain and discusses the diagnostic challenges.

A 36-year-old woman with systemic lupus erythematosus was evaluated for recurrent postprandial diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting and weight loss for one month. She had mild tenderness over right lower quadrant of abdomen with signs of dehydration and malnutrition. Faecal inflammatory markers: leukocytes, calprotectin and lactoferrin were negative. Despite supportive therapy with bowel rest, abdominal pain worsened with the development of rebound tenderness, vomiting and persistent diarrhoea. Lupus mesenteric vasculitis was suspected; urgent abdominal computed tomography angiogram was performed, and intestinal infarction and perforation were ruled out. Prompt treatment with high-dose methylprednisolone achieved complete clinical resolution.

The case highlights the importance of having a high degree of suspicion of mesenteric vasculitis in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus presenting with diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Early detection and prompt treatment will avoid gut-threatening complications as the entity is highly steroid responsive.