Cystic Lymphangioma of the Pancreas

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Background: Lymphangiomas are rare congenital benign tumors arising from the lymphatic system, and are mostly encountered in the neck and axillary regions of pediatric patients (95%). Lymphangioma of the pancreas is extremely rare accounting for less than 1% of these tumors. It can be seen in any age group but more frequent in females and is often located in the distal pancreas.

Case Report: The patient was a 54-year-old woman who complained of intermittent postprandial abdominal discomfort radiating back pain about 4 years. All laboratory values, tumor markers and serologic tests were within normal limits. 4 years ago, abdominal computed tomography (CT) scan revealed hypodense cystic mass 8×6.5 cm in diameter, originating from the tail of the pancreas without septa or solid component. From these, we diagnosed a pancreas pseudocyst. There was no interval change of regular follow up abdominal CT during 4 years. But she underwent distal pancreatectomy and splenectomy due to her persisting symptom. At laparotomy the lesion was found in the upper part of the tail of the pancreas containing milky fluid. The final histological diagnosis was lymphangioma of the pancreas. The patient had an uneventful postoperative course.

Discussion: The clinical picture of pancreatic lymphangiomas is usually symptomatic (92.2%). The typical appearance on abdominal image is a complex cystic mass with multiple septa. Unfortunately, this appearance is not unique and overlaps with cystic neoplasms of the pancreas. A preoperative diagnosis of PCL is difficult. Definitive diagnosis can only be made by histopathologic examination of the resected lesion.