An Unusual Small Bowel Perforation by a Foreign Body

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An otherwise healthy 56-year-old woman was admitted for abdominal pain. Approximately 2 h before admission, the patient had begun to experience abdominal pain and vomiting. She had fever, and presented with abdominal pain and tenderness in the lower right abdominal quadrant on physical examination.

Laboratory data disclosed a normal white blood cell count without left shift (7410/L). An abdominal X-ray showed a calcic image in the lower right abdominal quadrant (fig. 1). Acute appendicitis was considered; a CT scan was done showing a foreign body, an enlarged segment of small bowel and free intraperitoneal fluid (fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Plain abdominal X-ray showing a foreign body in the right lower abdomen.

Fig. 2. Abdominal CT scan demonstrating the foreign body, an enlarged segment of small bowel and free intraperitoneal fluid.

The patient underwent emergency laparotomy, and small bowel perforation by a foreign body was confirmed. The operative findings revealed purulent peritoneal fluid and an ileal perforation by a seafood shell. An intestinal resection with hand-sewn end-to-end anastomosis was performed. Figure 3 shows the surgical specimen and the foreign body. The patient had an uneventful hospital course and was discharged home on postoperative day 7. Interestingly, just before she left hospital, she explained that she had eaten Spanish rice with seafood, known as *paella*, the day before admission.

Fig. 3. The surgical specimen and foreign body (seafood shell).