Dissecting Aortic Aneurysm Simulating Acute Abdominal Cases

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Summary

Surveying a series of fifteen cases we found certain combinations of symptoms and signs recurring, which may help to give some indication of the diagnosis. Three cases had mainly abdominal symptoms.

Characteristically, the first sign is severe pain, followed by shock. If the patient survives this stage other signs may appear, such as shifting of the pain, a palpable mass, anemia, leucocytosis, neurological signs and signs simulating emboli in the lower extremities.

Two patients with primary rupture of the abdominal aorta were discussed, in both of whom the first symptom was abdominal pain followed by almost immediate loss of consciousness. Both complained of shifting of the pain (to other sites). In one patient there was a palpable mass in the abdomen and intense tenesmus.

In a third case the initial symptoms were the same, but subsequently the pain became persistently localized to the epigastrium, with marked tenderness and boardlike rigidity. As the patient had a previous history of peptic ulcer, laparotomy was carried out on suspicion of perforation. Owing to cardiac arrest the pericardium was opened in order to massage the heart. Large quantities of blood now emptied into the peritoneum. At necropsy a dissecting aneurysm of the ascending aorta was found, which had perforated into the pericardium.

Tourist's Disease

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Summary

Swedish tourism has steadily increased since the war, especially to southern Europe. The travellers are nowadays often "ordinary people". Their behaviour concerning eating and drinking is discussed. They sometimes consume unaccustomed things at irregular hours,