Colonic Ulcers in a Patient Taking Low-Dose Aspirin

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Dear Sir,

A 61-year-old man who was under treatment with low-dose aspirin for ischemic heart disease was admitted to our hospital because of bloody bowel discharge. His hemoglobin level was 10.6 g/dl (normal range: 11.3–14.5 g/dl) on admission. A colonoscopic examination revealed ulcers in the ascending colon (fig. 1). His symptom resolved with conservative therapy 2 weeks after admission.

Colonic side effects of low-dose aspirin are rare, but have increasingly been reported since the advent of colonoscopy. Most of these patients present with diarrhea and macro- or microscopic lower gastrointestinal bleeding. The diagnosis is based on a history of low-dose aspirin use and the absence of other apparent causes of colonic ulceration. Colonic ulcers caused by low-dose aspirin usually run a benign course and have an excellent prognosis when managed conservatively; however, relapse may occur in patients re-challenged with low-dose aspirin (after previous withdrawal of the medication).

In conclusion, colonic ulceration is a rare but clinically important condition in patients taking low-dose aspirin.

Fig. 1. An endoscopic examination revealed ulcers in the ascending colon.