CASE REPORT

Airway management in a patient with large antrochoanal polyp

Nupur Chakravarty, MBBS, MD*, Seema Shende, MBBS, MD*, Sanjay P. Dave, MBBS, MD***, Ramchandra Vinayak Shidhaye, MD, DA***

*Associate Professor; **Assistant Professor; ***Professor
Department of Anesthesiology, L. N. Medical College and J. K. Hospital Kolar Road, Bhopal-462042 (India)

Correspondence: Department of Anesthesiology, L. N. Medical College and J. K. Hospital Kolar Road, Bhopal- 462042 (India); Email: rvshidhaye@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
Anesthetic management of patients with large antrochoanal polyps needs anticipation and adequate preparation for the associated problems. Presenting as nasal polyps, these may mislead and cause unexpected problems in ventilation as well as intubation. We present a case of a large antrochoanal polyp leading to bilateral nasal obstruction undergoing general anesthesia for polypectomy. A brief review of literature is included.

Keywords: Antrochoanal polyp; Oropharyngeal airway obstruction; Sinonasal polypectomy

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INTRODUCTION
An antrochoanal polyp or Killian’s polyp (after Professor Gustav Killian, who described it in 1906) is a benign solitary polypoid lesion that affects mainly children and young adults. Originating from the maxillary sinus antrum, it grows through the maxillary sinus ostium towards the nasal cavity and posterior portion of the pharynx. Presenting as a case of nasal polyps, it may mislead and cause unexpected problems for the unsuspecting anesthesiologist during ventilation and intubation. The purpose of this case report is to reiterate the potentially dangerous implications of general anesthesia for surgery for these polyps can have.

CASE REPORT
A 35 year male patient with BMI of 23 kg/m², presented in the ENT outpatient department with complaints of bilateral nasal obstruction, change in voice and recurrent headaches for the previous one year. He also complained of rhinorrhea and hyposmia. On examination it was seen that the patient had obstructed nasal breathing and was predominantly a mouth breather. The degree of obstruction did not increase in the supine position. Oropharynx examination was done in the sitting position revealed no mass in the oropharynx. Airway was classified as Mallampati grade II. Neck extension and thyromental distance were within normal limits, Wilson Risk Score was less than 5 indicating easy laryngoscopy and intubation. A coronal view on contrast enhanced computerized tomography scan of paranasal sinuses reported a mass lesion extending from the left maxillary antrum into the nasopharynx and left nasal cavity. There was also an extension of the mass into the right nasal cavity. Axial view of CT scan showed a mass at the junction of nasopharynx and oropharynx. Systemic examination did not elicit any abnormality. Blood tests revealed a normal hemoglobin, platelet count, coagulation profile and renal function. Patient was diagnosed as a case of antrochoanal polyp with bilateral extensions into both nasal cavities and was posted for transnasal endoscopic sinonasal polypectomy under general anesthesia. No sedative premedication was given to the patient in preanesthesia room. In the operating room, anticipating the unexpected difficult ventilation and intubation difficult airway aids were kept ready. Fibreoptic bronchoscope mounted with a 7.5 mm ID tube was also kept ready. Monitoring included electrocardiogram lead II, pulse oximetry, non invasive blood pressure and capnography (Philips Sure Sign VM USA). Patient was given intravenous midazolam 2 mg, glycopyrrolate 0.2 mg and induced with intravenous propofol 2.5 mg/kg and fentanyl 2µg/kg. After ensuring adequate mask ventilation
and chest expansion, intravenous succinylcholine 2 mg/kg was given for vocal cord relaxation. On mask ventilating after giving relaxant we observed that the patient's chest was not expanding with positive pressure and capnogram also confirmed the observation. As arterial saturation at that moment was still 99% we did a fibreoptic bronchoscopy to investigate the cause of obstruction as well as to aid in intubating the patient. A large soft tissue mass was seen in the posterior nasopharynx extending into oropharynx which was obstructing the airway. Fiberscope was navigated past the mass through the cords, manipulation of a cuffed 7.5 mm ID tube was achieved into the trachea and airway secured. Packing was done around the tube to protect the airway from aspiration of blood. Nasal endoscopy was done and a fleshy polypoidal mass about 5×2 cm with a pedunculated extension (Fig.III) was excised and extracted via the left nostril. After haemostasis was achieved, orotracheal suction was done under vision, pack removed and extubation performed uneventfully when the patient opened his eyes and responded to our commands. Postoperatively patient had an uneventful course and was discharged on 3rd postoperative day. The patient was seen in the outpatients department two weeks post surgery and was well with complete resolution of his symptoms.

DISCUSSION

The antrochoanal polyp is benign solitary polypoidal lesion arising within the maxillary sinus but passing through and enlarging the sinus ostium or more commonly an accessory ostium into the choana and posterior nasopharynx. It is most commonly seen in young adults in 3rd to 5th decades and is more common in males compared to females.

These patients are usually young ASA I/II patients who are posted for transnasal endoscopic sinonasal polypectomy or functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS). Large choanal polyps obstructing the oropharyngeal airway have been reported in scientific literature. A similar case of unilateral antrochoanal polyp with bilateral nasal obstruction has also been reported. A history of change in voice should be suggestive of pharyngeal extension of the polyp. Thorough preoperative evaluation of the airway including indirect laryngoscopy to see the post nasal space and larynx for any growth and CT paranasal sinuses to see the extent of the mass is a necessary prerequisite. CT scans are helpful in attempts to quantify the extent of polyp disease and are essential before any surgical intervention. The polyps are expansible and in some cases may expand and erode the skull base. CT scan is essential for gathering data on the state of the skull base in these patients. A contrast x-ray neck lateral view may also prove useful in these cases. Although larger masses may prolapse posteriorly and be visible through the mouth as they hang down from the nasopharynx, in our case no mass was visible on oral examination. A similar finding has also been reported by other authors which may sometimes lead to judgemental errors. In our case the mass extended from the maxillary sinus ostium into the nasopharynx, and so was not visible on oral examination. Polypoidal masses arising from posterior ethmoidal sinus hang down in the oropharynx and are better visible.

We did not noticed any increase in the degree of obstruction after the patient assumed supine position while still conscious. Also there was no difficulty in mask ventilation so we felt safe in administering the relaxant. We were adequately prepared with airway aids like oropharyngeal airway and fibroscope to aid airway control in case of difficulty. Loss of muscle tone and airway collapse after muscle relaxant administration increase vulnerability of the upper airway to be obstructed during anesthesia leading to inability to ventilate the patient, as happened in our case. Adequate preparation for sudden loss of airway control, e.g. fibreoptic intubation or tracheostomy, should be ensured. Either securing the airway before anesthesia in doubtful cases or alternatively maintaining spontaneous breathing until intubation is the alternative. Insertion of an oropharyngeal airway and attempting ventilation may have helped, but has the risk of accidental traumatic bleeding and worsening of the situation. Use of a laryngeal mask airway in supraglottic lesions is not advocated for obvious reasons. Since we were prepared with the fibroscope we preferred to directly investigate and intubate the patient. We deliberately chose a smaller sized tracheal tube so that any risk of difficulty in tube manipulation into the trachea could be diminished.

Because of the risk of aspiration of blood, awake extubation should be performed in sinonasal surgery. Blood tests should always be performed in these patients to ensure that they are not suffering from underlying coagulopathy or blood dyscrasias since bleeding is a high risk factor in nasal cases and achieving adequate hemostasis is a challenging task.

CONCLUSION

We would like to emphasize through this case report the probable airway difficulties and adequate preparations for a case of nasal polyps. All aids for airway control should be in place and expertise in fibreoptic intubation should be at hand.
Airway management in antrochoanal polyp

REFERENCES


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Hideaki Tsuchida
Hideaki Tsuchida graduated from Sapporo Medical University, Chūō-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. Soon after, he started his post graduate training and joined Dept. of Anesthesiology at Sapporo Medical University. He qualified M.D. in 1979 and pursued his career in anesthesiology through Ph.D. from the same university in 1987. He was granted license to practice as Anesthesiologist (Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists) in 1985, as Pain Clinician (Japanese Society of Pain Clinicians) in 2008, as Cardiovascular Anesthesiologist (Japanese Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists) in 2010 and in Palliative Medicine (Japanese Society for Palliative Medicine) in 2011. He has been serving as a Professor and Chairman, Dept. Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Ishikawa, Japan since April 1999.

He held various academic and administrative positions in the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists, and its various committees including Education Committee and Scientific Committee. Presently, he is Director and President of the Japanese Society for Clinical Anesthesia as well as a Member of Scientific Affairs Committee, WFSA. He is also President elect. Japanese Society of Anesthesiology (2017).

Dr. Hideaki Tsuchida has more than 200 publications, including 44 in English, to his credit. He is a proud author of more than 38 books in Japanese.

Address: Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Kanazawa Medical University, Taijaku 1-1, Uchinada, Ishikawa, (Japan) 920-0293; E-mail: tsuchida@kanazawa-med.ac.jp

Telephone: +81-76-286-2211; Fax: +81-76-286-3475

Anuja Unnathie Abayadeera
Anuja Unnathie Abayadeera received her undergraduate medical education from Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka in March 1990 with three distinctions. She qualified MD in October 1994, FRCA (UK) and Board Certification from University of Colombo (Sri Lanka) in September 1996. She has a splendid career in teaching and won many awards. Presently she is Professor in Anesthesiology at University of Colombo and an Honorary Consultant Anaesthetist at University Surgical Unit, National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

She has played an active role in academic activities at College of Anaesthesiologists of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Medical Association, Society of Critical Care and Emergency Medicine, Royal College of Anaesthetists, UK, and various research and academic units/committees of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. She has been active in various capacities at Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo.

She has vast experience as editor and assistant editor for many of the research journals.

Anuja Unnathie Abayadeera has been a prolific writer and has more than one hundred published research papers, besides contribution to three books and public awareness programs on radio, television and the newspapers.

Address: 26, Matilkarama Road, Rathmalana (Sri Lanka); Telephone: Home 07155651; Mobile 077-779888; E-mail: drpugra@gnome, abayadeera@yahoo.com

Ashish C. Sinha, M.D., PhD
Ashish C. Sinha did his M.D. in 1986 from Bangalore University, Bangalore (India)

Soon he migrated to USA and completed his Ph.D. in 1991 from University of Texas (Biochemistry and Genetics) and is scheduled to complete his MBA next year from Drexel University LeBow School of Business.

He has held various academic appointments in Immunology/ Microbiology, Anesthesiology and Critical Care in top universities of USA. He also served conjoint appointments in the faculties of Internal Medicine, Otorhinolaryngology & Head and Neck Surgery. He is certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA)and eligible for American Board of Hyperbaric Medicine. He is now serving as Vice Chairman, Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine, Hennemann University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Ashish C. Sinha has a splendid academic and clinical record and he has won many awards of academic excellence including James W. McLaughlin Fellowship and Rogers Award for Patient Care Excellence. He has been a member of a number of national and international societies and organizations.

He held editorial positions in the Editorial Boards of various research journals including Obesity Surgery, Journal of Anaesthesiology Clinical Pharmacology, World Journal of Anesthesia, Journal of Anesthesiology & Clinical Science and Pain and Therapy. He has extensively lectured on diverse topics across six continents having delivered over six hundred lectures at various conferences across the globe. He has over a hundred publications and is now editing a textbook on ‘Anaesthesia in the Obese Patient’ to be published next year by the Oxford University Press, UK.

Address: Vice Chairman for Research, Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine, Hennemann University Hospital, 245 N 15th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (USA) 215-762-3544; E-mail: Ashish.Sinha@DrexelMed.edu

AKM Akhtaruzzaman
AKM Akhtaruzzaman is currently professor of neuoaesthetaesthesia and course co-ordinator, post graduate courses in anesthesia at Department of Anesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Medicine, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Shahnag, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

He is a graduate of Dhaka Medical College Dhaka. He qualified DA in July 1993 and MD (Anaesthesiology) in January 1998, from Institute of Postgraduate Medicine & Research (IPGMR), under University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. His career revolves around BIRDEM Hospital and BSMMU, Dhaka, from internships to the professorship. He underwent Hands on Training in Palliative Care in India and Hands-on Training on Pain Medicine and Fellowship in Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine in Tokyo (Japan).

He has keen interest in research and has won many awards. He was the principal investigator for ‘Neurolytic caeliac plexus block for pain relief in pancreatic malignancy - a comparative study’. He was also nominated Bangladesh Co-ordinator for Essential Pain Management (EPM) Course. Prof. AKM Akhtaruzzaman has held various academic and management appointments in professional societies and he has been a prolific writer, an author of more than hundred published works.

Mailing Address: Department of Anaesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Medicine, Room No. 1014, Block-C, 9th Floor, BSMMU, Shahnag, Dhaka-1000, (Bangladesh)

Residence: Apartment A-2, Green Jasmine House No-95, Road No-37, Diamond R/A, Dhaka-1205 (Bangladesh); Telephone: +88-02- 9615 881 (direct), +88-02- 966 1052-60 ext. 4217 (O); +88-02-9677740, (Res); Mobile: +88-01819- 202015; Email: akhtaruzzaman@bsmmu.edu.bd, akhtaruzzaman.akm@gmail.com, m@bdoonline.com