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Does Every Patient Need Colonoscopy Follow-up for Diverticulitis?

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Keywords

diverticulitis, colon cancer, colonoscopy, guidelines

Comments

Poster presented on Senior Scholars Presentation Day at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, on April 29, 2015. Medical student Rachel Ackerman participated in this study as part of the Senior Scholars research program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

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Does Every Patient Need Colonoscopy Follow-up for Diverticulitis?

Rachel Ackerman, BA, Justin Yamin, MD, Anne Foley, EdM,
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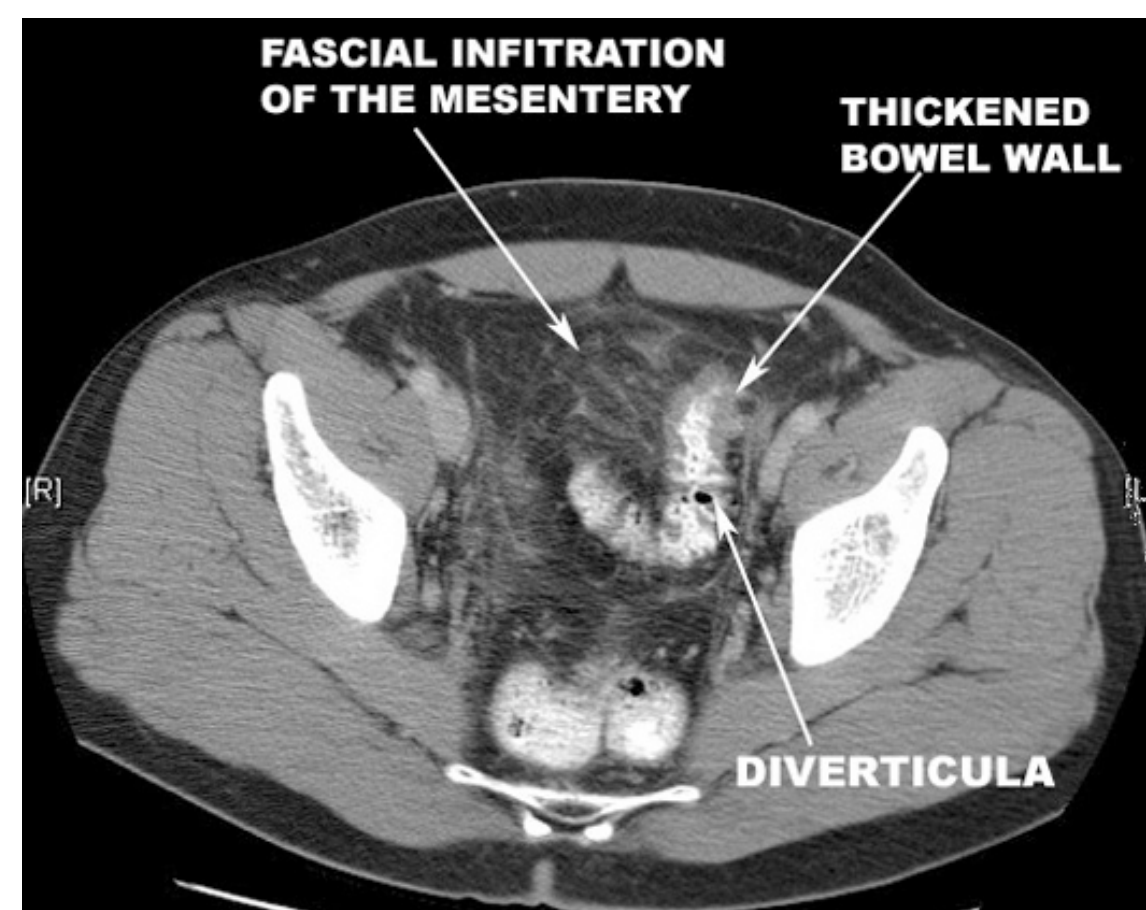


Background

- The American College of Gastroenterology recommends colonoscopy as follow-up after an episode of diverticulitis.
- Diverticulitis has been associated with the diagnosis of colon cancer.
- There is limited data on the yield of colonoscopy in this setting.
- Studies suggest that colonoscopy may only be warranted after episodes of complicated diverticulitis, which are associated with a higher likelihood of the presence of occult colon cancer.

Project Goals

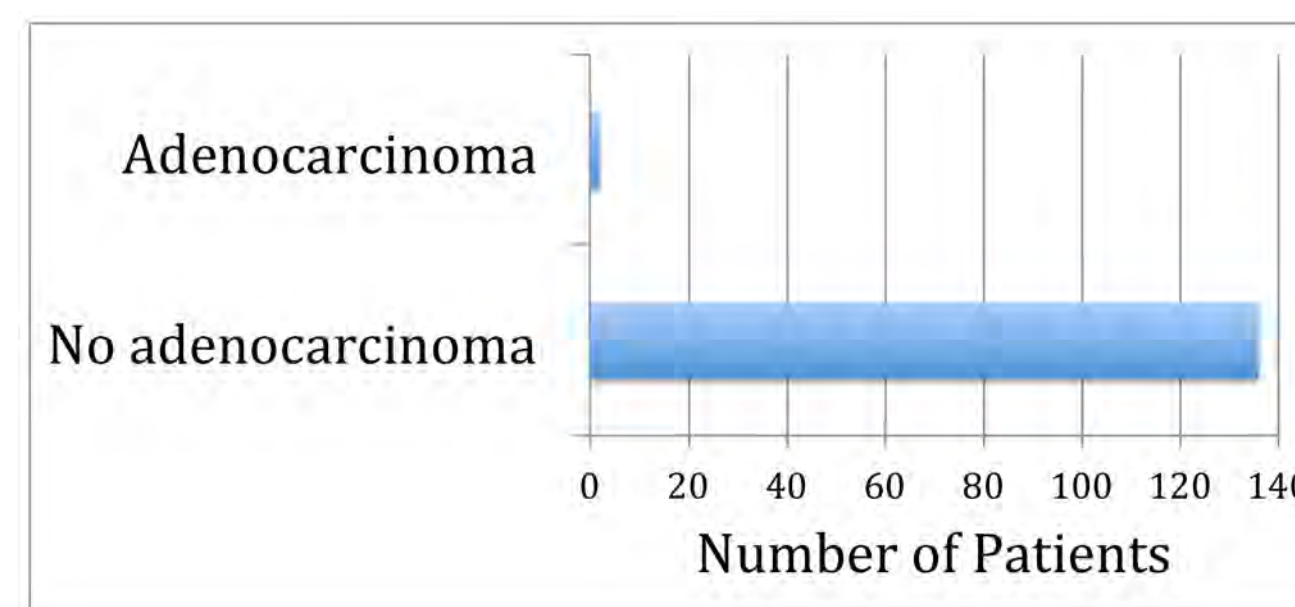
- The objective is to retrospectively examine the results of colonoscopy for follow-up of diverticulitis at our center.
- We are specifically looking for newly diagnosed carcinoma of the colon.
- This may help to develop future guidelines for follow-up.



CT scan with GI contrast showing findings of diverticulitis.
<http://www.meddean.luc.edu/lumen/MedEd/Radio/curriculum/Surgery/diverticulitis2.htm>

Methods

- The electronic medical record was searched for patients with colonoscopy performed for diverticulitis in the past five years.
- 521 charts were screened, 136 with CT-proven diverticulitis and sufficient documentation were included.
- History, imaging, colonoscopy findings, and pathology were reviewed.
- A descriptive analysis was performed and patient subgroups were compared using Fisher's exact test.



Two of 136 diverticulitis patients were found to have adenocarcinoma of the sigmoid colon on follow-up colonoscopy. Median time to follow-up was 72 days.

Results

- Two adenocarcinomas of the sigmoid colon were diagnosed after follow-up colonoscopy in 136 diverticulitis patients (1.5%).
- Both were diagnosed after uncomplicated diverticulitis, and neither had previous colonoscopies.
- Both localized to the same area as the diverticulitis.
- There was no significant difference between rates of carcinoma diagnosed among subgroups examined.



Colonoscopy images of adenocarcinoma of the sigmoid colon found on follow-up for diverticulitis.

Conclusions

- We believe colonoscopy should still be pursued after any episode of diverticulitis to rule out occult colon cancer.
- More evidence is needed before recommending changes to the current guidelines.
- We are looking back further in the electronic medical record to increase our sample size.

Acknowledgments

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