

Superior vena cava obstruction: A rare cause of oesophageal varices

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Abstract

Proximal oesophageal varices, or "downhill varices," are a rare manifestation typically associated with superior vena cava (SVC) obstruction, contrasting with the more common distal oesophageal varices linked to portal hypertension. These types of varices rarely complicate with upper gastrointestinal bleeding (UGIB).

We present a case of a 29-year-old male with end-stage renal disease due to focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, who has been on haemodialysis for five years and experienced multiple vascular access issues. The patient presented with a massive UGIB, and imaging revealed downhill oesophageal varices due to SVC obstruction. Prompt diagnosis and intervention, including the use of a self-expanding metallic stent and balloon venoplasty, resulted in a favourable outcome.

This case underscores the importance of recognizing less common causes of oesophageal varices, particularly in patients with complex medical histories. Understanding the clinical features and imaging findings is crucial for accurate diagnosis and appropriate management.