Giant inguino-scrotal bladder hernia
Report of a case
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Received 21 April 2000; accepted 1 July 2000

Abstract

Bladder hernia is very uncommon. It tends to affect patients over the age of 50 and is predisposed by cervico-urethral obstruction. The condition is often diagnosed during inguinal hernia surgery. The authors report a case of massive inguino-scrotal bladder herniation. The different types of bladder hernia are described, and the clinical-radiological findings and surgical management are discussed. © 2001 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Bladder hernia; Cystocele; Surgery

1. Introduction

Bladder hernias often go unnoticed. It is relatively common to detect minor bladder herniation in the course of herniorrhapsy in coexistence with hernia pathology. The incidence ranges from 1 to 10% [1] and the condition must be distinguished from less frequent massive bladder hernia or scrotal cystocele.

The present study describes a case of massive bladder hernia and reviews the epidemiological, diagnostic and therapeutic characteristics of this pathology.

2. Patient and methods

A 39-year-old male presented with a past history of left inguinal herniorrhaphy in childhood and appendectomy. For 2 months he had suffered pollakiuria, dysuria and urgency coinciding with the finding of a right inguinal mass. Examination revealed a painless, non-reducible right inguino-scrotal hernia, clinically suggestive of a bladder hernia. Cystography (Fig. 1) revealed the presence of a right inguino-scrotal cystocele.

Surgery under spinal anaesthesia confirmed the presence of over half of the bladder within the hernia sac. The bladder hernia was reduced and a hernioplasty was performed using a modification of the Lichtenstein technique [2], comprising plasty without transverse fascial tension, running from the arch of the transverse muscle to the iliopubic tract, and followed by the placement of a polypropylene mesh adapted to the passage of the inguinal cord and fixed to the common tendon, transverse muscle and inguinal ligament with monofilament sutures.

The postoperative course was uneventful, with spontaneous micturition. The patient remains asymptomatic following discharge.

3. Discussion

Bladder hernias of the abdominal wall were first described by Guy de Chauliac in 1363, and by Verdier in 1753 [3]. These conditions account for 1–10% of all hernias and generally affect males over the age of 50 [4]. In 75% of cases they are associated with an inguinal hernia [5], in 23% with a femoral hernia, and in the remaining 2% to other types of hernia (obturator, perineal and umbilical) [6].

Bladder hernias have also been reported following surgery, particularly herniorrhaphy, secondary to possible traction of the sutures upon the bladder wall and peritoneum [7]. Herniation as a result of traumatic pubic diastasis is much less common [8].
Urography is necessary to assess the upper urinary system, though bladder hernias may occasionally go undetected [10]. Orthostatism and dorsal decubitus are the best radiographic positions for visualising the hernia [11]. Echography and computed tomography (CT) are complementary explorations that may be particularly useful in the presence of associated urinary tract pathology [11].

Bladder participation in inguinal hernias does not modify either surgical indications or strategy. Management consists of fully reducing the bladder and repairing the abdominal wall. Resection of the herniated bladder zone is to be avoided, to reduce the risk of urethral damage and preserve bladder capacity [11]. In the event of bladder damage, suturing is required, with bladder reconstruction and drainage for 8–10 days. This results in increased morbidity and a longer hospital stay.

Preoperative investigation of a bladder hernia is very useful to avoid damaging the bladder and/or ureter during herniorrhaphy. The presence of a tumour mass that disappears with micturition, two-step micturition, or any urinary symptom associated with the hernia is suggestive of a bladder hernia. In such cases, cystography prior to herniorrhaphy or hernioplasty is indicated to confirm the diagnosis.

References