

PEDIATRIC CASE OF COIN INGESTION IMPACTED IN THE UPPER THIRD OF THE ESOPHAGUS: CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT IN A REGIONAL HOSPITAL

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Aim:

To present a pediatric case of coin ingestion with esophageal impaction and to highlight the clinical management, limitations, and decision-making process in a regional hospital setting without on-site pediatric gastroenterology services.

Material & Method:

A 4-year-old boy presented to the Emergency Department of Xanthi General Hospital with sudden onset of dysphagia and vomiting following suspected foreign body ingestion. Clinical examination revealed sialorrhea, discomfort, and mild restlessness, without respiratory distress or hemodynamic instability. Diagnostic imaging with neck and chest X-rays was performed. Supportive measures were initiated, including continuous monitoring of vital signs, low-flow oxygen therapy, and conservative management while preparing for possible intervention. Due to the absence of an on-call gastroenterologist and specialized endoscopic equipment, the decision was made to transfer the patient safely to a tertiary hospital in Thessaloniki for definitive treatment.

Results

Radiographic imaging showed a round metallic shadow with well-defined margins, consistent with a coin, impacted in the upper third of the esophagus at the level of the upper esophageal sphincter. The child remained hemodynamically stable throughout observation and transport. At the tertiary hospital, successful endoscopic removal under general anesthesia was performed without complications. The postoperative course was uneventful, and the patient was discharged after 24 hours in excellent condition.

Conclusions

This case emphasizes the importance of prompt diagnosis, stabilization, and timely referral of pediatric patients with foreign body ingestion. It highlights the challenges faced by regional hospitals with limited specialized resources and underscores the need for effective communication, established transfer protocols, and continuous training to ensure optimal patient outcomes.

