

Pearl-Like Lesions in the Guts: Bubble Tea in a Non-Contrasted Computed Tomography

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An 18-year-old girl was sent to the emergency department due to a traffic accident. A non-contrasted computed tomography (CT) of the abdomen found a focal liver laceration and multiple pearl-like lesions in the stomach and the duodenum. When pearl-like lesions with heterodensities were found in a CT of the abdomen, the bubble tea should be considered as a possible etiology.

Key words: bubble tea, computed tomography, trauma

Introduction

Using computed tomography (CT) to evaluate traumatic patients is a practical measure in the emergency department (ED). Here we report an accidental finding of CT in a patient with abdominal trauma.

Case Report

An 18-year-old girl was sent to the ED due to a traffic accident. A non-contrasted CT of the abdomen confirmed a focal liver laceration. The CT also found multiple pearl-like lesions with heterodensities in the stomach and the duodenum (Fig. 1). Those pearl-like lesions were around 100 to 140 Hounsfield units and 6 to 8 millimeter in diameter. The patient had neither stomachache nor coffee ground vomitus.

Tracing back the history, the patient drank a cup of “bubble tea” three hours before the traffic accident.

Discussion

To our knowledge, the image of bubble tea in computed tomographic scans had never been reported



Fig. 1. A non-contrasted computed tomography (coronal view) of the abdomen showing a focal liver laceration (black arrow) and multiple pearl-like lesions with heterodensities in the stomach and the duodenum (white arrow).

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in literatures. The bubble tea, also known as “pearl milk tea” or “boba milk tea,” was originated in Taiwan and is getting popular worldwide. The “pearl,” usually 5 to 10 millimeter in diameter, contains much starch made from tapioca with water and sugar for a gummy consistency.^{1,2} The bubble tea can be prepared with versatile flavors and served cold, hot, sweetened, with cream, or plain². A regular cup of bubble tea could have dozens of black tapioca pearls that sink to the bottom.

Conclusion

When pearl-like lesions with heterodensities

were found in a non-contrasted CT of the abdomen, the bubble tea should be considered as a possible etiology.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

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