

Pharyngo-oesophageal Foreign Bodies in Maiduguri

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ABSTRACT

Background: Pharyngo-oesophageal impaction of foreign bodies is an otolaryngological emergency.

Methods: A retrospective study of 79 patients with pharyngo-oesophageal foreign bodies managed in 5 years.

Results: Children aged group 0 - 4 years were the most affected. The one Naira and 50 Kobo coins were the most common foreign bodies (45, 68.4%) encountered. Other foreign bodies seen were bone 14 (17.7%), meat 3 (3.8%), pins and needles (3.8%) and denture 1(1.3%). The miscellaneous group constituted 5%. Foreign body in the form of needle were found in some magicians.

Conclusion: The need to educate parents on close monitoring of their children to avoid such accidents is stressed.

KEY WORDS: Pharyngo-oesophageal, Foreign bodies, Maiduguri.

Introduction

A variety of objects have been known to impact in the pharynx and the oesophagus but the popular method of removal remain esophagoscopy, first performed by Kussmaul in 1868 in a professional sword swallower.¹ Oesophageal foreign bodies may be silent or highlight an underlying pathological condition. Whereas

pharyngeal foreign bodies tend to cause more problems due to interference with breathing and the possibility of aspiration. Several reports on this subject have been made.²⁻⁶ The works of Okafor³ and Okeowo⁴ in Enugu and Lagos respectively are useful examples in our environment. This is a report of the experience with pharyngo-oesophageal foreign bodies in

Maiduguri, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

In the period January 1995 - December 1999 79 patients with pharyngo-oesophageal foreign bodies were seen at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, Maiduguri. The information on the age of patient, type of foreign bodies, clinical and radiological findings were extracted from the patient's case notes and operation notes and their x-rays film reviewed. All the patients had x-ray of the soft tissues of the neck prior to surgery. Barium swallow was performed in some patients where plain x-ray was not helpful.

Results

Forty-four (55.7%) were males and 35(44.3%) females. The age group 0-10 years were the most affected. Children aged 4 years and less

accounted for 59.5%. There was a decrease in the chances of foreign body impaction with increasing age (Table 1). The most common foreign body encountered was the coin (one Naira and 50 Kobo), accounting for 45(68.4%) cases while the least common was the denture seen in one patient (1.3%). Fish and meat bones were found in 14(17.7%) patients, whereas meat lump and pins or needles were the foreign bodies found in 3(3.8%) of patients each (Table 2).

Table 1: Age of 79 Patients with Pharyngo-oesophageal Foreign Bodies

Age (Years)	No. (%)
0-10	58 (73.4)
11-20	4 (5.1)
21-30	6 (7.6)
31-40	8 (10.1)
41-50	3 (3.8)
>50	0 (0)
Total	79 (100)

Table 2: Types of Foreign Bodies

Nature of foreign body	Baraka et al ² No. (%)	Okafor ³ No. (%)	Okeowo ⁴ No. (%)	This report No. (%)
Coin	27 (50)	38 (46.3)	128 (69.9)	54 (68.4)
Bone	2 (3.7)	34 (41.5)	28 (15.3)	14 (17.7)
Whole kola nut	-	-	15 (8.2)	-
Meat	8 (14.8)	1 (1.2)	1 (0.5)	3 (3.8)
Pins/needle	2 (3.7)	-	3 (1.6)	3 (3.8)
Dentures	-	4 (4.9)	4 (2.2)	1 (1.3)
Miscellaneous	15 (27.8)	5 (6.1)	5 (2.7)	4 (5.0)
Total	54 (100)	82 (100)	183 (100)	79 (100)

Discussion

Impaction of swallowed foreign body constitutes by far the commonest otolaryngological emergency in this country.³ In this study children age 0 - 4 years constituted 47 (59.5%) of patients. In a study by Baraka *et al*² children appeared to be the most affected with 51.8% aged 2-4 years.

In our environment Okafor³ and Okeowo⁴ have reported an incidence of 56% and 87.5% in age group 0 - 4 years respectively. Bhattia⁵ also reported a high incidence of foreign bodies in the ear, nose and throat in Children. In a later review by Okafor⁶ on throat diseases in South Eastern Nigeria, 118 patients had foreign bodies in the pharynx and the oesophagus.

Table 2 shows a variety of foreign bodies seen in this study compared with three other studies. Coins and bones (fish and meat bone) tend to be the most common objects. This is similar with the reports by Okafor³ and Okeowo⁴ while Baraka *et al*² reported that coins and lump of meat were the most commonly encountered foreign bodies. The coins in our series were the one Naira and 50 Kobo coins which got arrested at the cricopharynx. Lumps of meat were seen in three adult patients necessitating barium swallow to identify their levels. There was no oesophageal abnormality noted at oesophascopy in any of them. Baraka *et al*² and Okeowo⁴ reported a low incidence of pins and needles, which is similar to our finding. Out of the three patients seen with

needles, two were traditional healers who display their medicine and perform magic in an open scene especially on market days. Needles were introduced into the nasal cavities and brought out of the mouth normally by these magicians. In those two patients they got arrested in the hypopharynx and the cervical oesophagus. The third patient with the needle was a schoolboy who happened to watch such magicians in one of their display and tried it at home where the needle got arrested in the hypopharynx. Denture was seen in one patient at the cervical oesophagus. Slightly higher incidence was reported by Okafor³ and Okeowo.⁴ This could be due to their large sample size. However, Baraka *et al*² did not report any incidence in their study. The miscellaneous group consist of an earring, button, a piece of plastic and a seed. Okafor² reported earring and other items in this group. The swallowing of a whole kola nut was a common finding in Okeowo's⁴ study; such was rarely seen in our experience.

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65 Pharyngo-oesophageal Foreign Bodies. B. M. Ahmed *et al.*

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