Abstract

THE IMPORTANCE OF THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANORECTAL ULTRASONOGRAPHY IN THE STUDY OF ANAL PAIN

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Purpose: Anal pain may result from a range of clinical conditions and requires accurate diagnosis for adequate treatment. Three-dimensional anorectal ultrasonography (3D-US) can identify organic causes of anal pain not detactable by physical examination. The objective of this study was to evaluate the use of 3D-US to detect organic abnormalities in patients with anal pain. Methods: Twenty two patients (mean age: 49y; females n=13) with subclinical chronic anal pain for over three months were included in a prospective study between June 2009 and June 2011. Proctological examination and complete colonoscopy identified no abnormalities to explain clinical symptoms. Subsequently, patients were submitted to 3D-US. Results: Primary findings indicated an intersphincteric sepsis in fourteen subjects (63,6%). Two subjects (9.1%) presented sphincteric injury and grade-II rectocele in one of them. In three patients (13.6%), the thickness of the subepithelial tissue was above normal. One subject (4,6%) presented a retrorectal cystlike mass at the level of the middle rectum. In two subjects (9,1%), examination by US-3D evidenced no abnormalities. Conclusions: 3D-US is a simple, inexpensive and useful test for the study of anorectal pathologies and should be included in the investigative armamentarium used to rule out organic abnormalities in patients with anorectal pain.

KEY WORDS: Pain anal, endorectal ultrasound, intersphincteric sepsis