

Minutes on Tropical Pancreatitis

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Tropical pancreatitis, also known as fibrocalculous pancreatitis is a sub division of chronic pancreatitis, which is usually seen in the tropical countries [1].

Being confined typically in the younger age groups, it results in a large pancreatic stones and make them more prone to pancreatic cancer [1,2].

In it's classic form a triad of symptoms is noted which include abdominal pain, steatorrhea along with diarrhea [2].

Zuidema first reported the phenomenon of pancreatic duct calculi along with undernutrition in patients belonging to the lower socioeconomic group [2].

Pathogenesis for this disease remains largely unknown, with environmental factors along with the use of cassava (a tropical plant) playing a crucial role [3].

Pancreatic duct in these patients is frequently dilated with or without the presence of strictures [4].

Diagnosis is made usually on the basis of imaging which reveals large stones in the pancreatic duct on abdominal X-rays, Ultrasound or CT scan. This is in comparison to large number of small stones usually noted in chronic pancreatitis [5].

Genetic analysis have revealed that tropical pancreatitis is associated with the SPINK 1 gene [5].

Management usually resolves around treatment of diabetes and addressing steatorrhea via the use of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy [2].

Diabetes in these patients is difficulty to treat, hence commonly called brittle diabetes [3].

Early diagnosis along with the management of exocrine and endocrine insufficiency leads to a better control of symptoms and improved quality of life [2].

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