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Endoscopic removal of a granular cell tumor of the stomach

To the Editor:

Granular cell tumors are rare lesions of neural origin and are one of the rarest tumors occurring in the stomach. We are aware of only 21 reports of benign granular cell tumor of the stomach described in the literature. We are reporting one additional case of benign granular cell tumor of the stomach which was removed by endoscopic snare polypectomy.

A 62-year-old, white man was referred to us for evaluation of dysphagia of 4 to 5 years' duration. Upper gastrointestinal series showed a benign appearing stricture at the gastrosophageal junction. He denied taking any medications. His physical examination was normal. Panendoscopy was performed with the small caliber Pentax panendoscope which could be passed through this benign stricture. There was erosive esophagitis and in the body of the stomach there was a 1-cm polyp with a false stalk (Fig. 1). The polyp was removed by snare, and the patient tolerated the procedure well. The histological examination of the polyp showed an irregular distribution of normal glandular elements with many large, pale, foamy, granular, polygonal cells containing small uniform nuclei; this was interpreted as granular cell tumor of the stomach (Fig. 2).

Benign granular cell tumor can occur anywhere in the body. The histology of this lesion remains controversial, although histochemical and electron microscopic studies support a Schwann cell origin. Of the 95 cases studied by Strong et al., 2 67 cases of McSwain et al., 3 and 110 cases of Lach et al., 4 only once in each series was the stomach involved. In a series of 616 benign tumors of the stomach, a single case of benign granular cell tumor was recorded. 5 The malignant transformation of benign granular cell tumor in the gastrointestinal tract is extremely rare. The benign granular cell tumor of the stomach is usually submucosal, and endoscopic biopsies may not reveal the correct diagnosis. Excisional biopsy is indicated if it is feasible endoscopically, but surgical excision would be required in patients with a broad based, large, benign granular cell tumor that is ulcerated.

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