



Plummer-Vinson's Syndrome: An Enigma in Senegal

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Clinical Image

Plummer-Vinson's syndrome is characterized by dysphagia, iron deficiency anemia and the presence of a membranous ring of the cervical esophagus. It is exceptional in Western countries. In Africa, scattered observations and short series are reported in some countries (Morocco, Algeria, and Senegal). We had a series of 186 cases in 2 endoscopy centers in Dakar, Senegal (Aristide Le Dantec and Grand Yoff) in 10 years. The majority of patients are young women (mean age 25 years) with no nutritional deficiencies; the average duration of dysphagia is 5 years (range 3 months to 15 years). The average hemoglobin level is 10g/dL. A break-in of the membranous ring by the endoscope is possible in 15% of the cases and in all the remaining cases a dilation by Savary-Gilliard's candles is effective (average 2 sessions of dilation). We need a research program on the true causes of this syndrome in Senegal, where esophageal cancers are described in young but exceptionally well-known Plummer-Vinson syndrome patients (Figure 1,2) [1,2].



Figure 1: Esophageal membrane before dilation.

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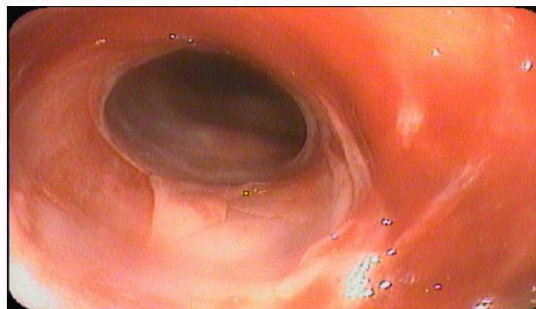


Figure 2: Esophageal membrane after dilation.

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