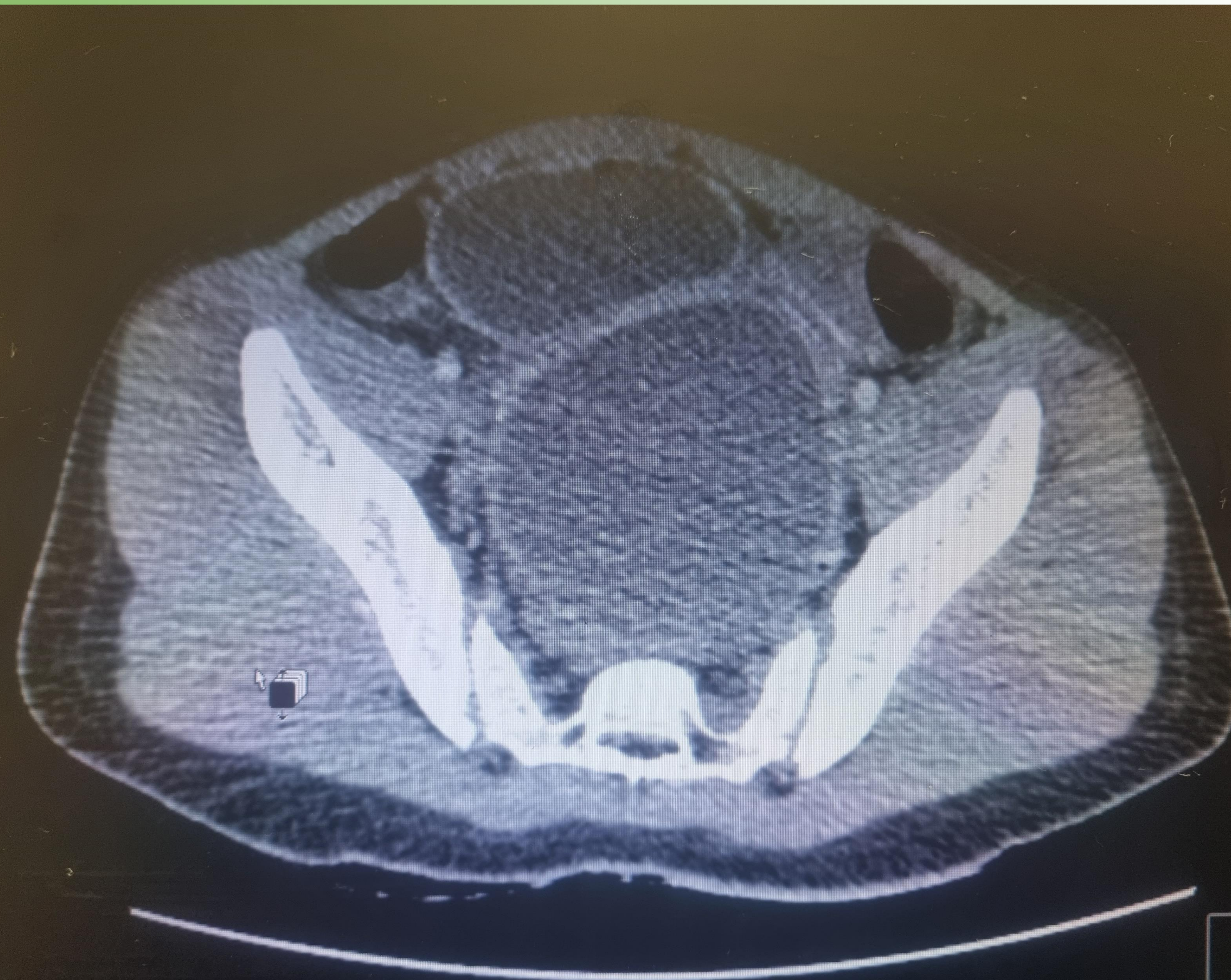


Constipation, an unusual presentation of haematocolpos

Authors: T Mokashi, A Gyimadu

Introduction: Imperforate hymen in young adolescent girls can lead to haematocolpos (Blood in vagina). The most common presentation is primary amenorrhoea with presence of secondary sexual characters. The patients can also present as abdominal pain, urinary retention or rarely as a pelvic mass that mechanically compresses the bowel thereby causing constipation.



Case: A 12-year-old girl was admitted from A&E with a history of severe lower abdominal pain due to severely worsening constipation. The patient had not started her menses yet. Three weeks before the admission she complained of lower abdominal pain and constipation for which she was taken to a different hospital and was given laxatives before discharge. A CT scan during the current admission showed a large cystic structure in the pelvis in the midline with no other abnormalities. The CT was suggestive of a haematocolpos and hence she was referred to the gynecology team. Pelvic examination revealed a pale blue imperforate hymen bulging from the vaginal introitus outwards. A cruciate incision was made over the hymen under GA to release the blood. The post-operative period was uneventful.

Management: The management of haematocolpos includes excision of the hymen under anaesthesia to drain the old blood. Rarely there can be vaginal atresia associated with other Mullerian anomalies. These cases will need to be managed in tertiary centre with correction surgery if needed. The cases with imperforate hymen with no other abnormalities usually have a good outcome with no long term consequences. In rare cases when the diagnosis is delayed, there can be damage to fallopian tubes and hence future fertility complications.

Conclusions: In cases of severe pelvic pain with constipation and a pelvic mass in an adolescent girl, the clinicians should consider imperforate hymen as a differential diagnosis. It can be easily treated surgically with good post-operative recovery and prognosis.