SPACER GEL EROSION THROUGH THE RECTAL WALL. A CASE REPORT DETAILING AN UNFORTUNATE SIDE EFFECT OF THE PROTECTIVE TREATMENT OF PROSTATE CANCER DURING RADIOTHERAPY.



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SpaceOAR Hydrogel is a FDA- approved bioabsorbable hydrogel injection that creates space between the prostate and rectum during prostate radiation therapy. The technology is new, with initial trials showing high safety and efficacy in reducing radiation toxicity to the rectum. Here we describe a case of hydrogel spacer erosion through the rectal wall.

A 71-year-old male who was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer had underwent injection of a spacer gel anterior to the rectum in anticipation of radiotherapy. The patient developed increased rectal pain, hematochezia and straining with smaller than normal caliber stool for two weeks prior to presenting to the ED. The CT scan showed a low attenuating 2.3 x 2.2 cm structure in/adjacent to wall of rectum. The patient was taken for a flexible sigmoidoscopy, which demonstrated a small erosion of the anterior rectal wall with a gelatinous mass extruding into the lumen consistent with the gel spacer.

Under direct vision a Debakey forceps was used to remove the visible superficial portion of the extruding mass which came apart easily, and was removed as safely as possible. The deeper portion was surrounded by inflammation therefore decision was made to leave it in place. The patient was kept for observation and treated with a short course of broad spectrum antibiotics. A repeat sigmoidoscopy was performed 3 weeks later at which time no further spacer was seen.

Insertion of several types of injectable agents such as hyaluronic acid, collagen and bioabsorbable hydrogel rectal spacers have been proposed as solutions to side effects of radiotoxicity for prostate cancer. Although early clinical studies have shown few adverse events related to the insertion of these spacers, there have been very few studies that have outlined the post-procedural complications of it's insertion.