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Editorials

623 Treatment Options for Venous Thromboembolism in Patients Receiving Dialysis

Thomas A. Mavrakanas

See related article on page 693.

626 Functional Assessment of High-Risk APOL1 Genetic Variants

Cassianne Robinson-Cohen

See related article on page 684.

628 Learnings from Throwing Paint at the Wall for COVID-19 with an SGLT2 Inhibitor

Katherine R. Tuttle

See related article on page 643.

631 CRRT Fluid Choices: A Solution for a Common Problem?

Anitha Vijayan

See related article on page 634.

Original Articles

Acute Kidney Injury and ICU Nephrology

634 Association of Phosphate-Containing versus Phosphate-Free Solutions on Ventilator Days in Patients Requiring Continuous Kidney Replacement Therapy

Melissa L. Thompson Bastin, Arnold J. Stromberg, Sethabhisha N. Nerusu, Lucas J. Liu, Kirby P. Mayer, Kathleen D. Liu, Sean M. Bagshaw, Ron Wald, Peter E. Morris, and Javier A. Neyra

See related editorial on page 631.

Chronic Kidney Disease

643 Dapagliflozin and Kidney Outcomes in Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19 Infection: An Analysis of the DARE-19 Randomized Controlled Trial

Hiddo J.L. Heerspink, Remo H.M. Furtado, Otavio Berwanger, Gary G. Koch, Felipe Martinez, Omar Mukhtar, Subodh Verma, Samvel B. Gasparyan, Fengming Tang, Sheryl L. Windsor, Vicente Cés de Souza-Dantas, Mildren del Sueldo, Robert Frankel, Ali Javaheri, Rafael A. Maldonado, Caryn Morse, Marco Mota-Gomes, Douglas Shemin, Osvaldo Lourenço Silva Jr., Alexandre Pereira Tognon, Marcel Twahirwa, Joan Buenconsejo, Russell Esterline, Jan Oscarsson, Philip Ambery, Anna Maria Langkilde, and Mikhail N. Kosiborod

See related editorial on page 628.

Clinical Nephrology

655 Provider Perspectives and Clinical Outcomes with Inpatient Telenephrology

Lagu A. Androga, Ziad Zoghby, Priya Ramar, Rachel H. Amundson, Margaret d'Uscio, Lindsey M. Philpot, Bjoerg Thorsteinsdottir, Andrea G. Kattah, and Robert C. Albright, Jr.

Diabetes and the Kidney

663 SGLT2 Inhibition and Uric Acid Excretion in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes and Normal Kidney Function

Danii L.S. Suijk, Michaël J.B. van Baar, Erik J.M. van Bommel, Zainab Iqbal, Merle M. Krebber, Volker Vallon, Daan Touw, Ewout J. Hoorn, Max Nieuwdorp, Mark M.H. Kramer, Jaap A. Joles, Petter Bjornstad, and Daniël H. van Raalte

Genetics

672 GWAS of Hematuria

Sarah A. Gagliano Taliun, Patrick Sulem, Gardar Sveinbjornsson, Daniel F. Gudbjartsson, Kari Stefansson, Andrew D. Paterson, and Moumita Barua

684 APOL1 Kidney Risk Variants and Proteomics

Teresa K. Chen, Aditya L. Surapaneni, Dan E. Arking, Christie M. Ballantyne, Eric Boerwinkle, Jingsha Chen, Josef Coresh, Anna Köttgen, Katalin Susztak, Adrienne Tin, Bing Yu, and Morgan E. Grams

See related editorial on page 626.

Maintenance Dialysis

693 Apixaban versus Warfarin for Treatment of Venous Thromboembolism in Patients Receiving Long-Term Dialysis

James B. Wetmore, Charles A. Herzog, Heng Yan, Jorge L. Reyes, Eric D. Weinhandl, and Nicholas S. Roetker

See related editorial on page 623.

Research Letter

703 Implementation of a Staff-Assisted Peritoneal Dialysis Program in the United States: A Feasibility Study

Wael F. Hussein, Paul N. Bennett, Ayesha Anwaar, Jugjeet Atwal, Veronica Legg, Graham Abra, Sijie Zheng, Leo Pravoverov, and Brigitte Schiller

Critical Care Nephrology and Acute Kidney Injury

706 The Intensivist's Perspective of Shock, Volume Management, and Hemodynamic Monitoring

Kianoush Kashani, Tarig Omer, and Andrew D. Shaw

717 Overview of Diagnostic Criteria and Epidemiology of Acute Kidney Injury and Acute Kidney Disease in the Critically Ill Patient

Bethany C. Birkelo, Neesh Pannu, and Edward D. Siew

Kidney Case Conference: How I Treat

736 The Transition of a Pediatric Kidney Transplant Recipient from Childhood to Adult Care

Lorraine E. Bell

Kidney Case Conference: Nephrology Quiz & Questionnaire

739 Recurrent Podocytopathy after Kidney Transplantation

Neetika Garg and Arjang Djamali

Perspectives

742 Changing the Trajectory of Heart Failure and Kidney Disease: A Call for Action

Janani Rangaswami, Vivek Bhalla, Glenn M. Chertow, Robert A. Harrington, Alexander Staruschenko, Katherine Tuttle, and Eugene Braunwald

746 SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Mandates for Patients on the Kidney Transplant Waitlist: Are They Ethical?

Faissal Tallaa, Lakshman Gunaratnam, and Rita S. Suri

Reviews

749 Mass Transport in High-Flux Hemodialysis: Application of Engineering Principles to Clinical Prescription

Farzad Mohajerani, William R. Clark, Claudio Ronco, and Vivek Narsimhan

757 Detecting and Treating Lung Congestion with Kidney Failure

Carmine Zoccali, Francesca Mallamaci, and Eugenio Picano

On the Cover

What is the diagnosis?

A 66-year-old male with a history of low-grade lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma status post autologous stem cell transplant, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and CKD stage 4 secondary to biopsy-proven AL amyloidosis and longstanding hydronephrosis secondary to retroperitoneal lymphadenopathy presented to the hospital with diarrhea and fatigue accompanied by decreased oral intake and cloudy urine output. He was found to have AKI with a serum creatinine of 5.0 mg/dl, sodium of 125 meq/L, and potassium of 6.3 meq/L.

Image Description:

Axial abdominal computerized tomography (left) shows extensive pararenal and retroperitoneal calcifications secondary to the patient's known AL amyloidosis and lymphoma. There is cortical thinning of the right kidney from chronic atrophy and bilateral hydronephrosis. The kidney ultrasound (right) shows hydronephrosis of the right kidney that is atrophic from the lymphadenopathy. Both images depict the compressive effects of the lymphadenopathy.

Coronal abdominal computerized tomography shows parenchymal thinning of the kidney due to chronic obstruction and hydronephrosis. The coronal computerized tomography image shows retroperitoneal and para-aortic obstructive lymphadenopathy.

Teaching Points:

The patient had hemodynamic instability and sepsis from a urinary tract infection that was complicated by extensive calcifications causing compressive and obstructive uropathy. Ultimately, the patient underwent bilateral percutaneous nephrostomy to relieve the urinary obstruction. This case demonstrates that patients with diseases such as amyloidosis and lymphoma are susceptible to obstructive uropathy from compressive lymphadenopathy. Patients present with a variety of symptoms, including palpable mass, palpable bladder, flank pain, or anuria. Additionally, they can present with laboratory abnormality consistent with an obstructive renal tubular acidosis, such as nonanion gap metabolic acidosis with hyperkalemia. Treatment of an obstructive AKI requires relief of the obstruction either through ureteral stenting or percutaneous nephrostomy. (Images and text provided by Samuel Aaron Lazoff, Bobak Sharifi, and Amanda Renaghan, University of Virginia, Nephrology, Charlottesville, Virginia)