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Images in Radiology

Out of Place: Gallstone Ileus

Robert G. Stern, MD, Images in Radiology Editor

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PRESENTATION

Infrequently, a gallstone can travel into the small intestine and lodge there, causing bowel blockage. This was the case for a 70-year-old man who was referred to us with abdominal pain, persistent nausea, and vomiting. He also reported dyspepsia of 3 months duration. His medical history included hypertension, chronic ischemic heart disease, and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

ASSESSMENT

On admission, the patient was mildly tachycardic and tachypneic. Physical examination revealed abdominal distension and hypoactive bowel sounds. A digital rectal examination identified soft stool, indicating that the patient was not constipated. He had no electrocardiographic abnormalities. Laboratory tests, including a normal lactate level, were unrevealing. After adequate resuscitation

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