

Syndrome of the Epigastrium

Syndrome of epigastrium

1. Acute appendicitis

- Begins as visceral epigastric pain in the middle (pain increases when pressing on the right lower abdomen – Rovsing’s sign), muscle guarding, rebound and percussion tenderness. Anorexia is an important feature and vomiting is rarely prominent.

2. Acute cholecystitis

- Pain below the right costal arch radiating below the right scapula (boas’s sign).
- Usually begins as colic, the transition in the inflammation affects pain lasting more than 6 hours and change its character to constant pain, elevated temperature, peritonitis and subicterus.
- Most often in middle-aged women and obese.
- Murphy’s sign – deep breath taken by the patient elicits acute pain when the examiner presses downwards into the right upper quadrant.
- Diagnostic – abdominal US, increase CRP and leucocyte

3. Perforation of gastroduodenal ulcer

- Perforation of ulcer appears as a sudden very strong pain in the upper abdomen leading to acute peritonitis.
- 80% with history of peptic ulcer.
- Diagnostic – AXR with pneumoperitoneum in 70 % of cases or CT if AXR is negative.
- Imaging can be performed with contrast (leaking of contrast is expected)

4. Acute pancreatitis

- Appears as shock-like state with strong epigastric pain, radiating to the back, and accompanied by paralytic ileus.
- Vomiting is prominent and sitting forward may relieve the pain.
- Grey Turner’s and Cullen’s sign – bruising and discoloration can be seen around umbilicus (Cullen’s) and left flank (Gray Turner)
- Diagnostic – raised serum amylase, CT, MRI

5. Ruptured or dissecting abdominal aortic aneurysm

- Hypotension and abdominal pain, tenderness and rigidity.
- Expansile pulsatile mass and bruit over mass
- Diagnostic – abdominal US / CT

6. Gastritis

- Epigastric pain, dull or burning discomfort, nocturnal pH
- Diagnostic – oesophagogastroscopy, barium meal and pH study

7. Duodenal ulcer

- Epigastric pain, dull or burning discomfort, typically relieved by food, nocturnal pain
- Diagnostic - oesophagogastroscopy, barium meal and pH study, H. pylori present in mucosa or serology

8. Gastric ulcer

- Epigastric pain, dull or burning discomfort, typically exacerbated by food
- Diagnostic – oesophagogastroscopy, barium meal and pH study