

Crohn's disease cont.

- These may penetrate through the bowel wall to initiate abscesses or fistulas involving the bowel, bladder, uterus, vagina and the skin of the perineum.
- There is thickening of the mesentery and enlargement of the mesenteric lymph nodes
- Crohn's disease has a patchy distribution and the inflammatory process is interrupted by islands of normal mucosa.

Clinical features

ULCERATIVE COLITIS

- Bloody diarrhoea
- The first attack is the most severe and there after the disease is followed by relapses and remissions
- Emotional stress, intercurrent infections, gastroenteritis, antibiotics or NSAIDs may provoke a relapse
- Proctitis causes rectal bleeding and mucus discharge sometimes accompanied by tenesmus.

ULCERATIVE COLITIS cont.

- Some patients pass frequent small volume fluid stools while others are constipated and pass pellety stools.
- Excessive colitis causes bloody diarrhoea with passage of mucus
- In severe cases, anorexia, malaise, weight loss and abdominal pains occur.
- Patient is toxic with fever, tachycardia and signs of peritoneal inflammation

CROHN'S DISEASE

- Abdominal pains, diarrhoea and weight loss
- ileal crohn's disease may cause sub acute or even acute intestinal obstruction watery diarrhoea
- Weight loss
- Patients avoid food since eating provokes pain
- Malabsorption – fats, protein or vitamin deficiency
- Many patients present with symptoms of small bowel and colonic disease.
- A few have isolated perianal disease, originating from jejunal strictures or even oral ulceration

On examination

- Evidence of weight loss, anaemia with glossitis and angular stomatitis
- Abdominal tenderness mostly marked over the area of inflammation
- Abdominal mass – due to matted loops of thickened bowel or an intra abdominal abscess may occur.
- Perianal skin tags, fissures, or fistulas are found in 50% of the patients.

Differential diagnosis

It is important to distinguish the first attack of acute colitis from infection.

CONDITIONS WHICH CAN MIMIC ULCERATIVE OR CROHN'S COLITIS

INFECTIVE

BACTERIAL

- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Campylobacter jejuni
- E. coli 0157
- Gonococcal proctitis

VIRAL

- Herpes simplex
- Cytomegalovirus

PROTOZOAL

- Pseudomembranous colitis
- Chlamydia proctitis
- Amoebiasis