

Case report

Fatal intussusception in infancy: an experience in forensic autopsy

Paul M. Ng'walali, Kosei Yonemitsu, Shigeyuki Tsunenari

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1344-6223\(03\)00056-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1344-6223(03)00056-7)

Abstract

Intussusception, although a common cause of pediatric surgical emergencies, is a rarely fatal condition. A 7-month-old infant who was discovered in her cot was unresponsive and pronounced dead after 2 h of uneventful cardiopulmonary resuscitation in an emergency hospital. Forensic autopsy which was performed in order to clarify the circumstances surrounding the death revealed intussusceptions at two sites of the ileum. Although morbidity and mortality rates from the condition have progressively declined in recent decades but avoidable deaths still occur as was experienced in the present case. The forensic pathology significance in this case was the occurrence of 'painless intussusception' whereby the affected child clinically exhibited no discomfort or characteristic features of acute abdomen until death. In summary, the present case has exhibited an uncommon fatal occurrence and demonstrated the importance of forensic autopsy in such unexpected sudden infant deaths.