



Chinese dragon sign: splenic artery calcification

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‘Chinese dragon sign’ describes the appearance of tortuous calcified splenic artery on an abdominal radiograph [1, 2]. The Dragon is a mythical creature and denoted generally as snake-like with four legs and considered one of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac [3] (Fig. 1). The tortuous course with arterial wall calcification resembles the body of dragon, and the more tortuous coiled segment near the splenic hilum resembles the head of dragon (Fig. 2).

Splenic artery tortuosity and calcification are common findings in the abdominal radiograph and computed tomography (CT) of the abdomen of elderly and diabetic population. Splenic artery shows a relatively linear course in the pediatric population and tortuosity develops with increasing

age due to mismatch in the growth of vessel and distance between its origin and splenic hilum [4]. Calcification is usually medial (located in tunica media) with circumferential and continuous tram track appearance on radiographs. It is often an incidental finding but can be associated with aneurysms [5]. Splenic artery aneurysm is the commonest visceral artery aneurysm and has a small risk of rupture [6]. It can be calcified although splenic artery calcification has no relationship with the development or rupture of aneurysms. Splenic artery aneurysms cannot be confidently diagnosed on a radiograph and needs contrast-enhanced CT [7].

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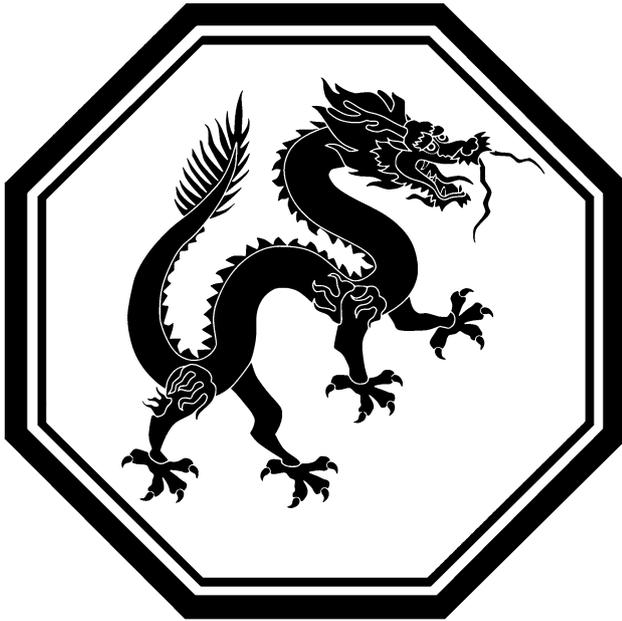


Fig. 1 Image of The Chinese dragon Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_\(zodiac\)#/media/File:Dragon.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_(zodiac)#/media/File:Dragon.svg). Accessed 4 April 2018. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported license

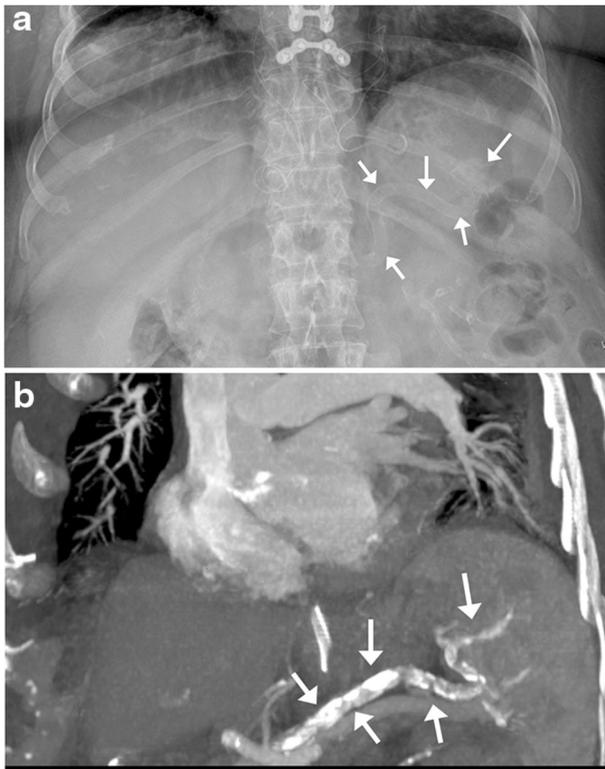


Fig. 2 **a** Radiograph of the upper abdomen showing the tortuous and calcified splenic artery in the left upper quadrant (arrows). **b** Coronal view of contrast-enhanced CT showing the tortuous and calcified splenic artery reaching the splenic hilum (arrows)

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest All the authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Research involving human participants and/or animals All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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