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IMAGE OF THE MONTH

A melanosis coli associated with a large flat adenoma of the cecum



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A 78-years-old woman was referred with skin metastasis of an endocrine carcinoma. Colonoscopy was performed to search for a primary tumour. She had a long history

of constipation and extensive use of laxatives containing anthraquinone. Colonoscopy revealed an impressive deep black pigmentation of the entire colonic mucosa match-

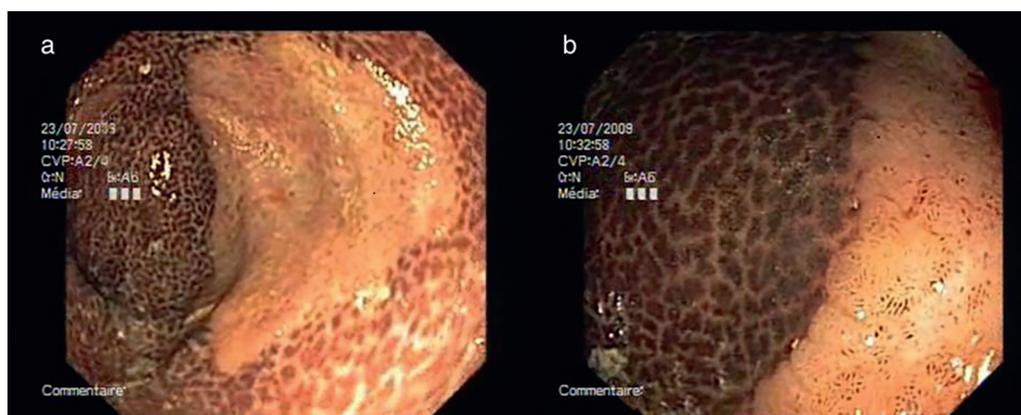


Figure 1 Colonoscopy revealing a large flat adenoma.

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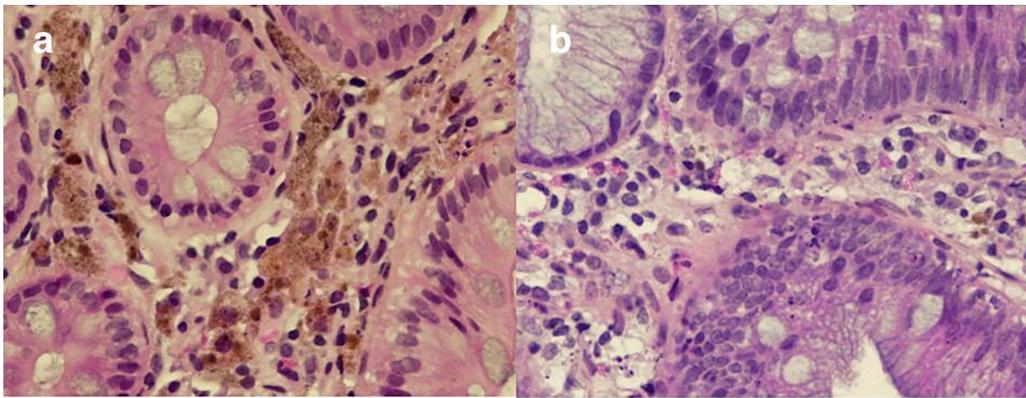


Figure 2 Biopsy showing lamina propria macrophages filled with brown coloured pigment granules (a); biopsy showing few pigment-containing macrophages in the lamina propria of the adenoma (b).

ing with a melanosis coli, except for an area of the cecum corresponding to a large flat adenoma. As shown on representative images of the cecum obtained by endoscopy (Fig. 1a and Fig. 1b), the colonic flat adenoma was better appreciated, as it did not contain the melanin-like pigmentation. As shown in Fig. 2a, biopsy specimen of melanosis coli routinely treated with a standard hematoxylin-eosin stain shows lamina propria macrophages filled with brown coloured pigment granules. By contrast, biopsy specimen of the flat lesion showed only few pigment-containing macrophages in the lamina propria of the adenoma (Fig. 2b).

Melanosis coli is considered a benign lesion because no association with colorectal cancer has been shown. Colorectal adenomas do not contain the melanin-like pigmentation [1]. Interestingly, the melanosis coli helped the detection of this flat adenoma considering the mucosa's pigmentation differential. As previously reported, the melanosis coli explained the ease of detection of colorectal adenoma as white area within a dark-coloured colonic mucosa [2]. Colonic flat or depressed lesions are not easily detected and removed using standard endoscopic methods. Chromoendoscopy refers to the topical application of stains or dyes at the time of endoscopy to enhance tissue characterization, differentiation, or diagnosis [3]. Considering our case, as chromoendoscopy improves the diagnostic yield for flat colonic adenomas in patients undergoing colonoscopy,

melanosis coli is also helpful for the detection of flat adenoma.

Author contributions

Manuscript writing: Thierry Lecomte.

Provision of study material and/or patient: Thierry Lecomte, Isabelle Orain.

Final approval of manuscript: Thierry Lecomte, Isabelle Orain, Romain Chautard.

Disclosure of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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