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RE-PUBLISHED

Prevalence of Silent Gallstones on Ultrasound in a Nigerian Population

Prévalence des Calculs Biliaires Silencieux à l'Échographie dans une Population Nigériane

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Gallstones detected incidentally during imaging are termed ‘silent’ or asymptomatic gallstones and they account for 80% of all gallstones. About 1-2% of patients with silent gallstones develop symptoms yearly; however, determining those who will develop symptoms is a major challenge. Ultrasonography is the most sensitive and specific method of detecting gallstones with an accuracy greater than 95%. The study aims to determine the prevalence of ultrasound-diagnosed silent gallstones in a Nigerian population and to determine its association with age and gender.

METHODS: This was a retrospective analysis of abdominal ultrasound scans performed at the Radiology department of a tertiary institution between January 2013 and December 2015. Data retrieved included age, sex, and sonographic findings. Data analysis was done by simple proportions and percentages using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0 software.

RESULTS: Two thousand, one hundred and thirty-eight patients had abdominal ultrasound scans for various reasons during the study period. These included 915 males and 1223 females. Incidental findings of gallstones were observed in 52 patients, giving a prevalence of 2.4%. The prevalence of gallstones increased with age ($p=0.051$) with the highest prevalence seen in the 5th decade. Gallstones prevalence was higher in females with a male-to-female ratio of 1:3.5.

CONCLUSION: The prevalence of silent gallstones is low in our environment, but given the complications that may arise, follow-up for early detection of complications in the patients is therefore strongly recommended. **WAJM 2023; 40(7): 748–752.**

Keywords: Silent gallstones, Ultrasound, Nigerian.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: Les calculs biliaires détectés fortuitement lors de l'imagerie sont appelés calculs biliaires “silencieux” ou asymptomatiques et représentent 80% de tous les calculs biliaires. Environ 1 à 2 % des patients atteints de calculs biliaires silencieux développent des symptômes chaque année ; cependant, déterminer ceux qui développeront des symptômes est un défi majeur. L'échographie est la méthode la plus sensible et la plus spécifique pour détecter les calculs biliaires avec une précision supérieure à 95 %. L'étude vise à déterminer la prévalence des calculs biliaires silencieux diagnostiqués par échographie dans une population nigériane et à déterminer son association avec l'âge et le sexe.

MÉTHODES: Il s'agit d'une analyse rétrospective des échographies abdominales réalisées au service de radiologie d'un établissement tertiaire entre janvier 2013 et décembre 2015. Les données récupérées comprenaient l'âge, le sexe et les résultats échographiques. L'analyse des données a été faite par proportions et pourcentages simples à l'aide du logiciel Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0.

RÉSULTATS: Deux mille cent trente-huit patients ont subi une échographie abdominale pour diverses raisons au cours de la période d'étude. Il s'agissait de 915 hommes et de 1223 femmes. Des calculs biliaires ont été observés chez 52 patients, soit une prévalence de 2,4 %. La prévalence des calculs biliaires augmente avec l'âge ($p=0,051$), la prévalence la plus élevée étant observée au cours de la cinquième décennie. La prévalence des calculs biliaires était plus élevée chez les femmes avec un ratio homme/femme de 1:3,5.

CONCLUSION: La prévalence des calculs biliaires silencieux est faible dans notre environnement, mais compte tenu des complications qui peuvent survenir, un suivi pour la détection précoce des complications chez les patients est donc fortement recommandé. **WAJM 2023; 40(7): 748–752.**

Mots-clés: Calculs biliaires silencieux, Échographie, Nigérian.

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