 Killian-Jamieson diverticulum mimicking a thyroid nodule: A case report

Koshi Ota MD, MPH1 | Miyako Onoe MS2 | Masahiro Oka MD1 |
Kanna Ota MD1 | Kohei Taniguchi MD1 | Masahide Sakaue MD1 | Akira Takasu MD1

1Department of Emergency Medicine, Osaka Medical College, Takatsuki City, Osaka, Japan
2Osaka Medical College Health Science Clinic, Takatsuki City, Osaka, Japan

Correspondence
Koshi Ota, Department of Emergency Medicine, Osaka Medical College, Takatsuki City, Osaka, Japan.
Email: emm006@osaka-med.ac.jp

Abstract
Killian-Jamieson diverticulum (KJD) is a rare disease of the cervical esophagus, often misidentified as thyroid nodules on ultrasonography. We performed carotid artery ultrasonography for an asymptomatic 68-year-old man. The ultrasound showed an oval nodule with heterogeneous echogenicity surrounded by a multilayered rim in the posterior left thyroid gland. As endoscopy and computed tomography confirmed pharyngoesophageal diverticulum in the anterolateral wall of the esophagus, we reached a final diagnosis of KJD. In cases where a thyroid nodule is detected by ultrasound, physicians should be aware of the possibility of KJD before performing invasive procedures.

KEYWORDS
health screening, Killian-Jamieson diverticulum, ultrasound

1 | INTRODUCTION

Pharyngoesophageal diverticulum is a rare disease of the cervical esophagus. Killian-Jamieson diverticulum (KJD) is a form of pharyngoesophageal diverticulum, representing an evagination through a muscular gap in the anterolateral wall of the proximal cervical esophagus. Several reports have described incidental detection of KJD misidentified as thyroid nodules on ultrasonography.1-3 Dysphagia is the most common symptom of KJD and may be associated with regurgitation, cough, food retention, epigastric pain, halitosis, and swelling of the neck, but 81% of KJD cases are asymptomatic.3 Many cases of KJD may thus go undiagnosed.

Ultrasound screenings of the thyroid or carotid artery may occasionally detect nodules posterior to the thyroid gland in asymptomatic individuals. In cases where such nodules are detected, physicians should be aware of the possibility of KJD before performing invasive procedures, especially when the nodules are left-sided. We present a case of asymptomatic left-sided KJD detected on barium esophagography 3 years prior to the ultrasound. The patient in this case provided written, informed consent for publication of the details of his condition.

2 | CASE PRESENTATION

An asymptomatic 68-year-old man visited the clinic for a regular annual health check. His past medical history included dyslipidemia and gastrointestinal discomfort. Pharmacotherapies included rosuvastatin, polycarbophil calcium, and Lactomin probiotic (BIO-THREE Toa Pharmaceutical, Tokyo, Japan). He had smoked 40 cigarettes/day for 30 years, but had quit smoking almost 20 years earlier. He reported no symptoms of dysphagia, halitosis, food retention, or neck swelling. Ultrasonography using a Canon Xario SSA-660A system (Canon Medical Systems Corporation, Otawara, Japan) with a 7.5-MHz linear transducer (PLT-704SBT; Canon Medical Systems Corporation) showed a 14.3 × 11.1 mm oval nodule with heterogeneous echogenicity surrounded by a multilayered rim in the posterior left lobe of
the thyroid gland (Figure 1A,B). The posterior border was connected to the esophagus (Figure 1A,B). Endoscopy and computed tomography (CT) subsequently confirmed pharyngoesophageal diverticulum representing KJD (Figures 1C,2A-D). The patient remained asymptomatic as of 2 years after the ultrasound screening. The diverticulum had actually been visible on barium esophagography conducted

**FIGURE 1** A transverse ultrasound image (A) shows a well-demarcated, oval hypoechoic nodule (white arrow) with a multilayered rim resembling esophageal wall, along with multiple echogenic spots in the posterior left thyroid gland (T). A connection (yellow arrow) between the nodule (white arrow) and esophagus (E) is clearly visible. A longitudinal ultrasound image (B) shows an oval, hypoechoic nodule (white arrow), but no multilayered rim or multiple echogenic spots are visible. The connection (yellow arrow) between the nodule (white arrow) and esophagus (E) is clearly visible. An endoscopic view (C) shows the KJD (arrow) originating on the anterolateral wall of the cervical esophagus in the 9 o’clock direction. *, esophageal lumen

**FIGURE 2** Axial computed tomography (CT) images of the chest (A,B) show a cystic lesion protruding anterolaterally from the esophagus (arrow) in the posterior left thyroid gland. Axial cervical CT images (C,D) show an air-filled cystic lesion originating from the esophagus anterolaterally (arrow) in the posterior left thyroid gland. Esophagogram (E) confirms Killian-Jamieson diverticulum (arrow) protruding anterolaterally to the left.
3 years prior to the ultrasound (Figure 2E), but that result was neither relayed to the patient nor shared with medical practitioners.

3 | DISCUSSION

Killian-Jamieson diverticulum is a pharyngoesophageal diverticulum in the anterolateral wall of the proximal cervical esophagus. This pathology is less common than Zenker diverticulum arising on the posterior wall of the proximal cervical esophagus, with an incidence ratio to Zenker diverticulum of 1:4. Based on the epidemiology of Zenker diverticulum, the estimated annual incidence of KJD would be 1 per 200,000, with a prevalence between 0.0025% and 0.025%. However, these incidence and prevalence values may represent underestimations, since most patients with KJD are asymptomatic and may not seek medical advice. Most cases of KJD are left-sided, although the reason for this laterality is unknown. Screening ultrasonography of the thyroid or carotid artery may incidentally detect such pharyngoesophageal diverticula. Unnecessary biopsy has been performed in patients with KJD following misdiagnosis as a thyroid nodule. Medical practitioners and sonographers should be aware of the potential for KJD before performing invasive procedures such as needle biopsy or TEE.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have stated explicitly that there are no conflicts of interest in connection with this article.

ETHICAL STATEMENTS

All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1964 and later versions.

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from the patient for being included in the study.

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