

# PHYTOBEZOAR: A CASE REPORT

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BEZOARS may be trichobezoars, phytobezoars or one of the atypical types such as xylobezoar, silicobezoar, lignibezoar etc. Phytobezoars are masses formed from vegetable material and are rare in occurrence.

## CASE REPORT

A 38 year old Indian man presented with epigastric pain off and on for about 4 years. Antacids gave him little relief. A laparotomy was done and a gastro-jejunosomy with vagotomy was performed for an ulcer in the first part of the duodenum. The patient was discharged after recovery. However 3 months later the patient returned with severe abdominal pain from intestinal obstruction. Laparotomy revealed a mass about 10 cm from the duodeno-jejunal junction which was the cause of obstruction. An enterotomy was done and the mass, a phytobezoar, (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) was removed. The patient made an uneventful post-operative recovery.

## DISCUSSION

Phytobezoars may be formed from persimmons, celery, pumpkins, leathers, grape skin, prunes, raisins, mellows, wild beet, and iniobezoar of coconut fibre etc. "The Harpanahalli" bezoar is a unique variety and has a specially dangerous effect. It is formed by the blood of a species of chameleon to which certain drugs are added. It is neither vomited out nor passed through the pylorus, but produces gastritis in about 2 weeks and death from inanition in about 3 months. It is commonly used in homicidal poisoning. A rare form of bezoar, potato skin bezoar, has been reported by Wilde (1965) in gastrectomised patients. Any of the bezoars may lead to

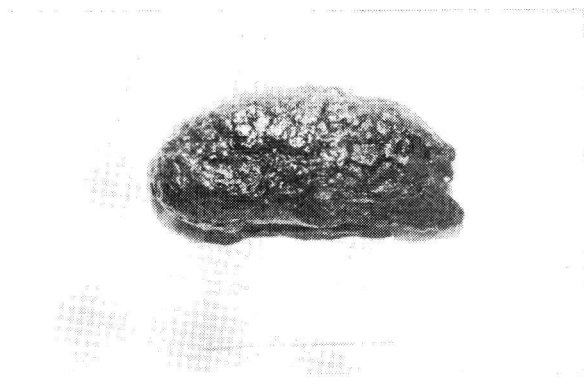


Fig. 1: Photograph of the phytobezoar removed from the patient.



Fig. 2: The phytobezoar being surgically removed.

low ileal obstruction or gastro-intestinal perforation of which the fatality rate is over 70%. Phytobezoars also occur following Bilroth I and gastro-jejunostomy. Delayed emptying favours the incidence. Bezoars may slip into the efferent limb and cause small intestinal obstruction (Chin and Dinan, 1965). Most phytobezoars require surgical removal although some attempts have been done to disintegrate the bezoar. For example 1% hydrogen peroxide with mineral oil may be used for a starch bezoar formed from the ingestion of large quantities of laundry starch.

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