

Starry sky liver and bladder debris in diagnosing ruptured appendicitis in children – a case report.

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Introduction :

Ruptured appendicitis can be difficult to diagnose if the radiological investigations cannot visualise the appendix. In some cases, other radiological findings can be used to indicate abdominal inflammation and to suggest appendicitis while ruling out other causes of infection.

This case report is to highlight some of these other radiological findings that can be associated with ruptured appendicitis in children.

Case:

A 2 year old boy attended the hospital with persistent vomiting, fever and general lethargy and reduced appetite. He was admitted and had the relevant investigations performed and was given IV antibiotics. An abdominal ultrasound which showed a starry sky appearance of the liver and a large quantity of debris in the bladder. The appendix was not visible but there was no clear inflammation around it. A repeat ultrasound scan 2 days later visualised an inflamed appendix in the right flank and a laparoscopic appendicectomy was performed. The boy then became clinically well and was discharged home.

Despite the appendix not being visualised in the first scan, if increased awareness of the other radiological signs of appendicitis were known, the child would have received the appropriate treatment earlier.

Conclusion :

Increased awareness for other signs of intra-abdominal inflammation and possible appendicitis are important in improving paediatric care in the future to hasten them receiving the most appropriate treatment.