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It's Not Cyclic Vomiting Syndrome Until Dietl's is Ruled Out: A Case for Point of Care Renal Ultrasound

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2 / 2

PEDIATRIC CASES RE-DIAGNOSED WITH BEDSIDE RENAL POCUS

Both initially labeled cyclic vomiting · severe unilateral hydronephrosis on POCUS

POCUS

BEDSIDE RENAL ULTRASOUND PERFORMED BY EPS

Severe unilateral hydronephrosis appeared in both cases

Multiple

PRIOR PCP AND ED ENCOUNTERS BEFORE RE-DIAGNOSIS

Symptomatic treatment only · negative GI workup

Dietl's

SUBSEQUENT EVALUATION CONFIRMED UNDERLYING ETIOLOGY

Commonly overlooked in children

BACKGROUND

Diagnostic momentum hides a treatable cause.

Abdominal pain and vomiting frequently prompt pediatric ED visits.

Diagnostic momentum regarding chronic abdominal pain or cyclic vomiting can create confirmation bias.

Dietl's crisis, commonly overlooked in children, presents with episodic pain and vomiting, yet remains diagnosable via bedside point of care ultrasound.

CASE SERIES

Two pediatric patients, one diagnostic shift.

Two pediatric patients with episodic abdominal pain and vomiting carried prior cyclic vomiting diagnoses despite negative gastroenterology testing.

Both had multiple primary care and ED encounters with symptomatic treatment only.

When EPs performed renal POCUS, severe unilateral hydronephrosis appeared in both cases.

Subsequent evaluation confirmed Dietl's crisis as the underlying etiology.

- **Episodic abdominal pain**
- **Episodic vomiting**
- **Negative GI workup**
- **Severe unilateral hydronephrosis on POCUS**

WHY SHOULD AN EP BE AWARE?

POCUS expedites diagnosis and prevents recurrence.

> *"EPs should be wary of the diagnosis of cyclic vomiting syndrome until ureteral obstruction has been ruled out."*

Bedside POCUS expedites diagnosis and potentially prevents:

- Recurrent healthcare visits
- Unnecessary testing
- Permanent renal damage

TAKE-HOME

Add renal POCUS to the pediatric episodic-vomiting bedside.

In children with episodic abdominal pain and vomiting carrying a prior cyclic vomiting diagnosis, EPs should be wary of confirmation bias. A bedside renal ultrasound is a fast, low-cost step that can identify Dietl's crisis — preventing recurrent healthcare visits, unnecessary testing, and permanent renal damage.

ASK ME ABOUT

- POCUS workflow
- Differentiating Dietl's
- Confirmation bias in pediatrics
- Specialist follow-up

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