CASE REPORT

Stage Ia endometrial carcinoma diagnosed on removal of an IUD

Tracey A Kay, BM BS(Hons), DFFP, Senior SHO; Stephen D Keay, MD, MRCOG, Specialist Registrar; Patrick Miller, MRCOG, GP/Gynaecological Practitioner; John N Renninson, MRCOG, Consultant Gynaecologist

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter, UK.

Correspondence: Tracey A Kay, Specialist Registrar Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Plymouth Hospital NHS Trust, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, PL6 8DU, UK.

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Summary
This is a case report of a 49-year-old woman who presented with offensive vaginal discharge. Her Lippes loop IUD was removed and discovered to have suspicious material attached. Histology report was of endometrial carcinoma. This is the first report of an endometrial carcinoma being completely removed along with an IUD.

Key words
endometrial carcinoma, IUD

Key message points
• This is a case of complete removal of endometrial carcinoma with an IUD.
• It is important to send suspicious tissue for histological diagnosis.
• There are no reports of IUD use predisposing to endometrial carcinoma.

Case Report
A 49 year old woman, para 2 + 1, presented to her general practitioner (GP) with a 2 month history of a clear, offensive vaginal discharge. Her Lippes loop IUD was removed and discovered to have suspicious material attached. Histology report was of endometrial carcinoma. This is the first report of an endometrial carcinoma being completely removed along with an IUD.

Key message points
• This is a case of complete removal of endometrial carcinoma with an IUD.
• It is important to send suspicious tissue for histological diagnosis.
• There are no reports of IUD use predisposing to endometrial carcinoma.

The operation was unremarkable and no abnormal masses or lymph nodes were palpated. Histology reported no residual carcinoma of the endometrium, staging her as an Ia cancer of the endometrium. The patient made an uncomplicated postoperative recovery and no further treatment is planned. Follow-up will be in the joint gynaecology/pathology meeting, and the diagnosis was confirmed.

After discussion with the patient a decision was made to proceed with a total abdominal hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy; this was carried out the following week. The operation was unremarkable and no abnormal masses or lymph nodes were palpated. Histology reported no residual carcinoma of the endometrium, staging her as an Ia cancer of the endometrium. The patient made an uncomplicated postoperative recovery and no further treatment is planned. Follow-up will be in the joint gynaecology/pathology meeting, and the diagnosis was confirmed.

Discussion
This is the first report of a stage Ia endometrial carcinoma being completely removed along with an IUD, in this case a Lippes loop. It is likely that the lesion was developing as a polyp within the endometrial cavity.

One may suggest that had the IUD not been removed, then the endometrial carcinoma may have progressed. Given the moderate to poorly differentiated nature of the tumour, it would then have had a higher risk of nodal metastasis. If the tissue removed with the IUD had not been examined, the diagnosis would have remained unknown. The subsequent progress in this situation is uncertain, but the patient is likely to have had a higher risk of subsequent carcinoma developing. This emphasises the need to send tissue for histological diagnosis, particularly when the nature of the tissue is uncertain, however it is obtained.

This patient did not have any of the known risk factors for developing endometrial carcinoma (obesity, diabetes, tamoxifen exposure or nulliparity) and was younger than the average peak incidence of 61 years of age. It is unlikely that the IUD predisposed to the endometrial cancer. It is known that IUDs invoke acute and chronic inflammatory responses in the endometrium, but studies have shown that IUD use is not associated with an increased risk of endometrial cancer. Some data, in fact, suggest a protective role of IUD use on endometrial carcinogenesis.

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References

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