Pancreatic ascites can result from disruption of the pancreatic duct with the resultant intraperitoneal accumulation of pancreatic juice. A 71-year-old female was admitted to our hospital with complaints of diffuse, sharp abdominal pain for the last 7 days. One week prior to admission she had undergone an endoscopic ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration (EUS-FNA) of a pancreatic tail cyst; a 22-gauge needle was used to aspirate clear fluid from what appeared to be a 13-mm side branch intraductal papillary mucinous neoplasm (Fig. 1).

Upon presentation her abdomen was diffusely tender with no rebound or guarding. A computed tomography (CT) scan of the abdomen revealed a loculated collection in her left upper abdomen measuring 10 cm x 4.7 cm, inflammatory changes around the pancreas consistent with acute pancreatitis, and pancreatic duct dilation (Fig. 2).

A drain placed via CT guidance produced serosanguineous fluid, and the amylase level was 7809 U/L. The patient subsequently underwent an endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) for pancreatic duct stenting. At the time of the ERCP an ampullary adenoma was biopsied, which revealed a tubular-villous adenoma with high-grade dysplasia (Fig. 3).

The pancreatic collection progressively resolved over a period of 4–6 weeks, following treatment with pancreatic duct stenting, percutaneous drainage, and intravenous antibiotics.

Well-documented complications of pancreatic EUS-FNA include pancreatitis, nonspecific abdominal pain, infection, hemosuccus pancreaticus, and retroperitoneal bleeding [1, 2]. Our case is a previously unreported and serious complication of pancreatic EUS-FNA. It is possible that the ampullary mass created a high-pressure pancreatico-biliary system and our FNA “track” passing through the main pancreatic duct allowed for decompression causing pancreatic ascites. The endoscopic placement of a transpapillary pancreatic duct stent could facilitate healing of ductal disruptions by partially occluding the leaking duct or bypassing the pancreatic sphincter, converting the normally high-pressure pancreatic ducts to a low-pressure system with preferential flow through the stent [3].

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Pancreatic ascites: complication after endoscopic ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration of a pancreatic cyst

Fig. 1 Pancreatic tail cyst.

Fig. 2 Loculated collection on computed tomography.

Fig. 3 Tubular-villous adenoma with high-grade dysplasia.
J. P. Babich¹, R. J. Bonasera¹, J. Klein², D. M. Friedel¹
¹ Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, New York, USA
² Department of Pathology, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, New York, USA

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