Paediatric Surgical Question (question 11): MMC trial exam

**The parents of a young child arrive in the ED with a GP letter diagnosing a likely intussusception**

1. **List 3 risk factors for intussusception (3 marks)**

1.Age: 2-24 months, peak 5-9 months ½ mark if in range, 1 mark if in peak range

2. Males (3:1 ratio)

3. recent viral illness, ie URTI, gastroenteritis

4. HSP, CF, haematological disorders (Maximum of one mark for any number in this group)

5. lead point (other than recent viral illness): Meckel’s, polyp, inverted appendix stump

6 past history of intussusception

7. rotavirus vaccine (controversial – slight increase in risk with newer vaccines (6 per 100,000), but paid if mentioned.

Prematurity and Hirschprungs disease and family history mentioned by some candidates, not mentioned in Nelson, tintinelli, up-to-date. Previous surgery not accepted or theoretically possible.

1. **List three (3) clinical findings when examining this child’s abdomen that would support the diagnosis or complication of intussusception. List one (1) significance for each finding (6 marks)**

1. Palpable upper abdominal mass – increases likelihood of diagnosis (must mention upper abdominal/RUQ or periumbilical)

2. Guarding/rigidity – indicates peritonitis

3. Abdo distension,tympanic percussion note – signs of BO

4. Bloody stool observed– evidence of ischaemic bowel (PR exam will not receive marks)

5. localized pain on palpation – ischaemic/infarcted bowel

Drawing up of legs in pain, pallor mentioned by many candidates, given ½ marks – the question asked for findings when examining the abdomen, this is more an observation. Visible peristalsis mentioned a number of times – not supported by the references (perhaps candidates confusing with pyloric stenosis findings?)

1. **List 3 complications for performing an air enema (3 marks)**

1. tension pneumoperitoneum

2. Bowel perforation

3. Bacteraemia

4. peritonitis

5. rectal trauma

6. failure of procedure

Recurrence allowed even though the question was intended to ask for acute compications, pain was not accepted even though most candidates mentioned this. The rationale being that pain is a potential complication for any procedure – this question was testing knowledge of a specific condition and this answer was too generic. Air embolism mentioned by a few, not accepted, it doesn’t happen.

Pass mark = 8