

## Whipple's disease

Hristo Valkov<sup>1</sup>

Mila Kovacheva-Slavova<sup>1</sup>

Ivan Lyutakov<sup>1</sup>

Borislav Vladimirov<sup>1</sup>

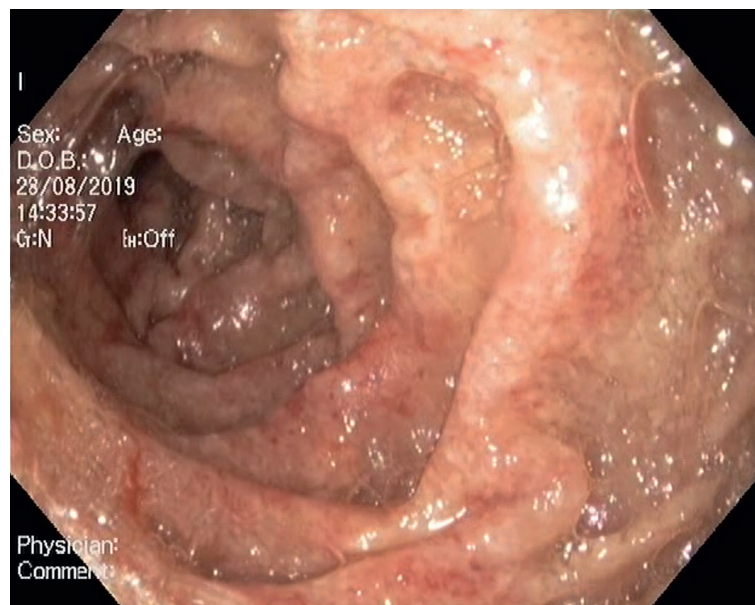
Plamen Penchev<sup>1</sup>

Author details can be found at the end of this article

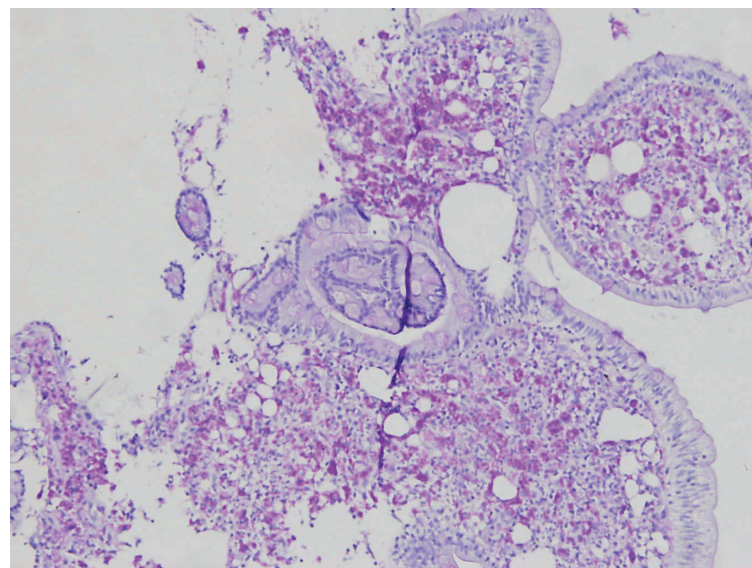
Correspondence to:

Hristo Valkov; hristo.valkov.m.d@gmail.com

A 57-year-old man presented with complaints of watery diarrhoea, marked weight loss, intermittent fever and fatigue. Physical examination revealed peripheral lymphadenomegaly, accompanied by the following abnormal laboratory findings: leukocytosis, microcytic anaemia, hypoalbuminaemia and high levels of C-reactive protein. Oesophagogastroduodenoscopy was performed and the appearance of the duodenal mucosa was highly suspicious for Whipple's disease (**Figure 1**). The infiltration of the duodenal mucosa with periodic acid-Schiff-positive macrophages confirmed the diagnosis of Whipple's disease (**Figure 2**). Whipple's disease had spread to the peripheral lymph nodes, verified after excision of the axillary lymph nodes, which is very rare, as Fenollar et al (2007) have reported. The



**Figure 1.** Diffusely hyperaemic duodenal mucosa with a pale yellow appearance, multiple erosions and haemorrhagic suffusions seen on oesophagogastroduodenoscopy.



**Figure 2.** Histology specimens showed diffuse infiltration of the duodenal mucosa with periodic-acid Schiff-positive macrophages, findings which are compatible with Whipple's disease (10x).

### How to cite this article:

Valkov H, Kovacheva-Slavova M, Lyutakov I, Vladimirov B, Penchev P. Whipple's disease. *Br J Hosp Med.* 2021. <https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2020.0614>

patient was treated with a third-generation cephalosporin, followed by oral maintenance therapy with trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole. After 1 year follow up and treatment, his clinical condition had improved significantly and the endoscopic appearance of the duodenal mucosa had normalised, but focal infiltration of periodic-acid Schiff-positive macrophages was still seen in biopsy specimens of the duodenal mucosa.

Gastroenterologists should be familiar with Whipple's disease, which is a curable disease, but can be fatal if it goes unrecognised.

#### Author details

<sup>1</sup>Department of Gastroenterology, Clinic of Gastroenterology, University Hospital 'Tsaritsa Yoanna-ISUL', Medical University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

#### Acknowledgement

This work is supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under the National Program for Research 'Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Students'.

#### Reference

Fenollar F, Puéchal X, Raoult D. Whipple's disease. *N Engl J Med.* 2007;356(1):55–66. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMra062477>