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Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Pediatric Surgery

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jped surg.org

Correspondence

Response to: Effect of COVID-19 on pediatric appendectomy presentations and complications


Dear Editor,

We read, with significant interest, the article recently published by the colleagues Li and Saleh [1]. The study aimed to examine the effects of COVID-19 on pediatric patients with acute appendicitis (PAA) with regard to presentations and complications. The authors performed a chart review of pediatric patients admitted with a diagnosis of appendicitis from March to June 2020. The data were then compared with an equivalent 'pre pandemic' period.

Despite certain additional details analyzed by the colleagues (i.e., presenting symptoms, blood work, and vitals), the study is substantially comparable to the study published by La Pergola et al., in 2020 [2]. The latter was conducted as the first retrospective and multicentric review of the cases of pediatric appendicitis in a large COVID-19 pandemic area. The study conducted by our group analyzed data from the first wave of the pandemic in Italy when the mortality for SARS-CoV-2 reached its peak [3]. Although few reports showed a delay in diagnosis in the pediatric departments during the pandemic [4] and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the surgical activity was well-known [5], our data did not confirm a statistically significant decrease in the number of PAA and an increase of complicated AA.

Our multicentric study was not mentioned nor taken into account in the discussion conducted by Li and Saleh. In light of the opposite results obtained by the two studies, we feel that the conclusions drawn by the authors that state that the pandemic would lead to later presentation of PAA to healthcare facilities, and with more severe illness at the time of presentation, should be limited to a certain geographic area and as a specific result in one healthcare system during the pandemic.

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