



ACUTE NECROSIS OF THE ESOPHAGUS ("BLACK ESOPHAGUS")

The Role of CT in Assessing Disease Severity and Excluding Complications



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Introduction

Acute necrosis of the esophagus (ANE), also known as “black esophagus,” is a rare but potentially life-threatening condition characterized by diffuse necrosis of the esophageal mucosa. It most commonly presents with hematemesis or melena, and its etiology is multifactorial, including ischemia, impaired perfusion, and mucosal injury. Imaging plays an important role in assessing disease extent and excluding complications such as perforation with mediastinitis and/or abscess, as well as esophageal strictures and stenosis.

Case presentation



Urgent esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) demonstrated diffuse black necrotic mucosa of the esophagus without active bleeding, suggestive of ANE.



A 69-year-old male with a history of arterial hypertension and gout presented with sudden right-sided chest pain radiating to the neck and episodes of hematemesis. Laboratory findings revealed elevated lactate and mild leukocytosis.



Noncontrast CT of the chest showed diffuse esophageal wall thickening, more pronounced in the mid and distal thirds, without mural enhancement on contrast enhanced CT, and with mild periesophageal inflammatory infiltration, without signs of perforation or mediastinitis.

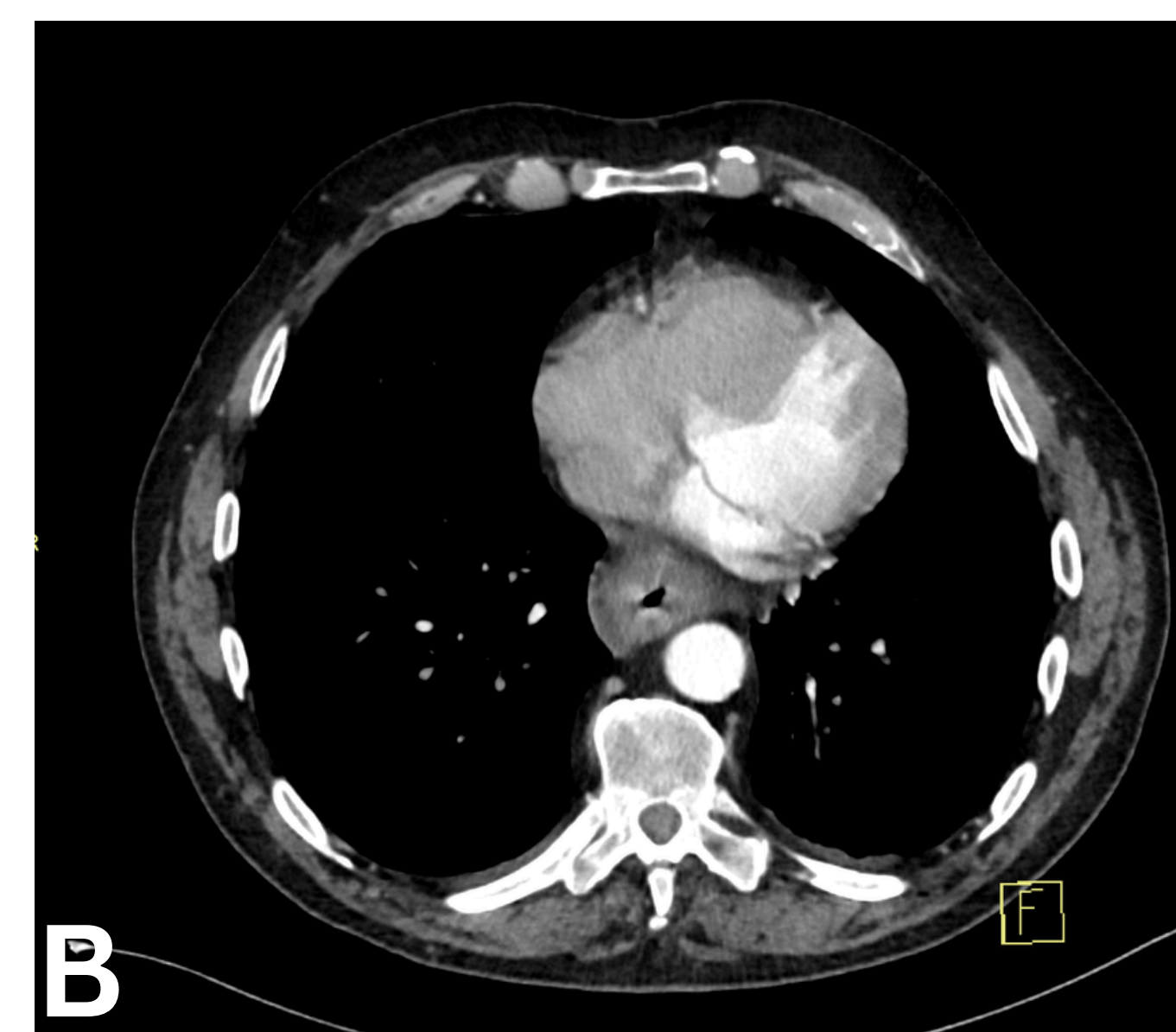
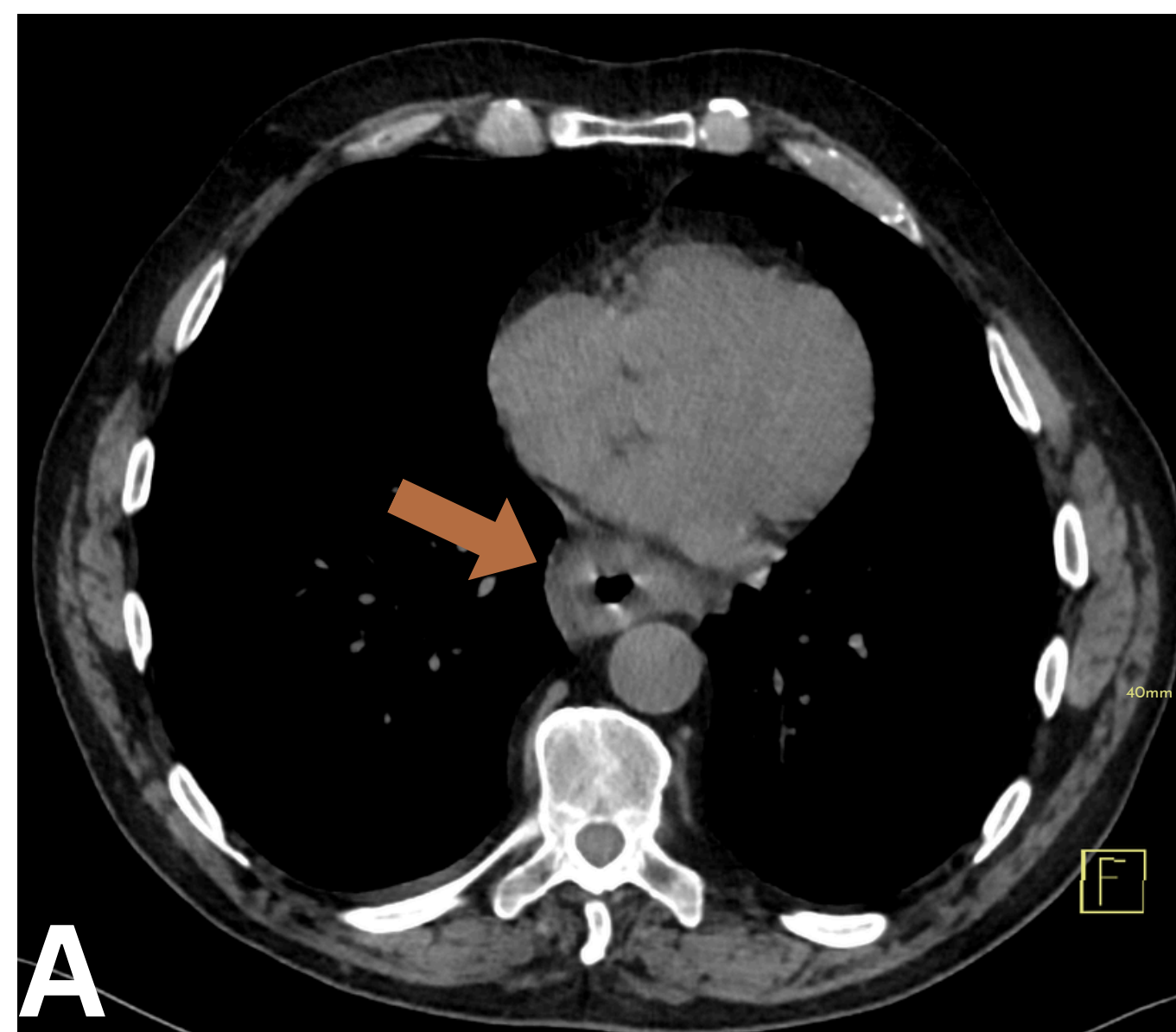


Figure 1: Noncontrast CT of the chest showing diffuse esophageal wall thickening (A), without mural enhancement on contrast enhanced CT (B).

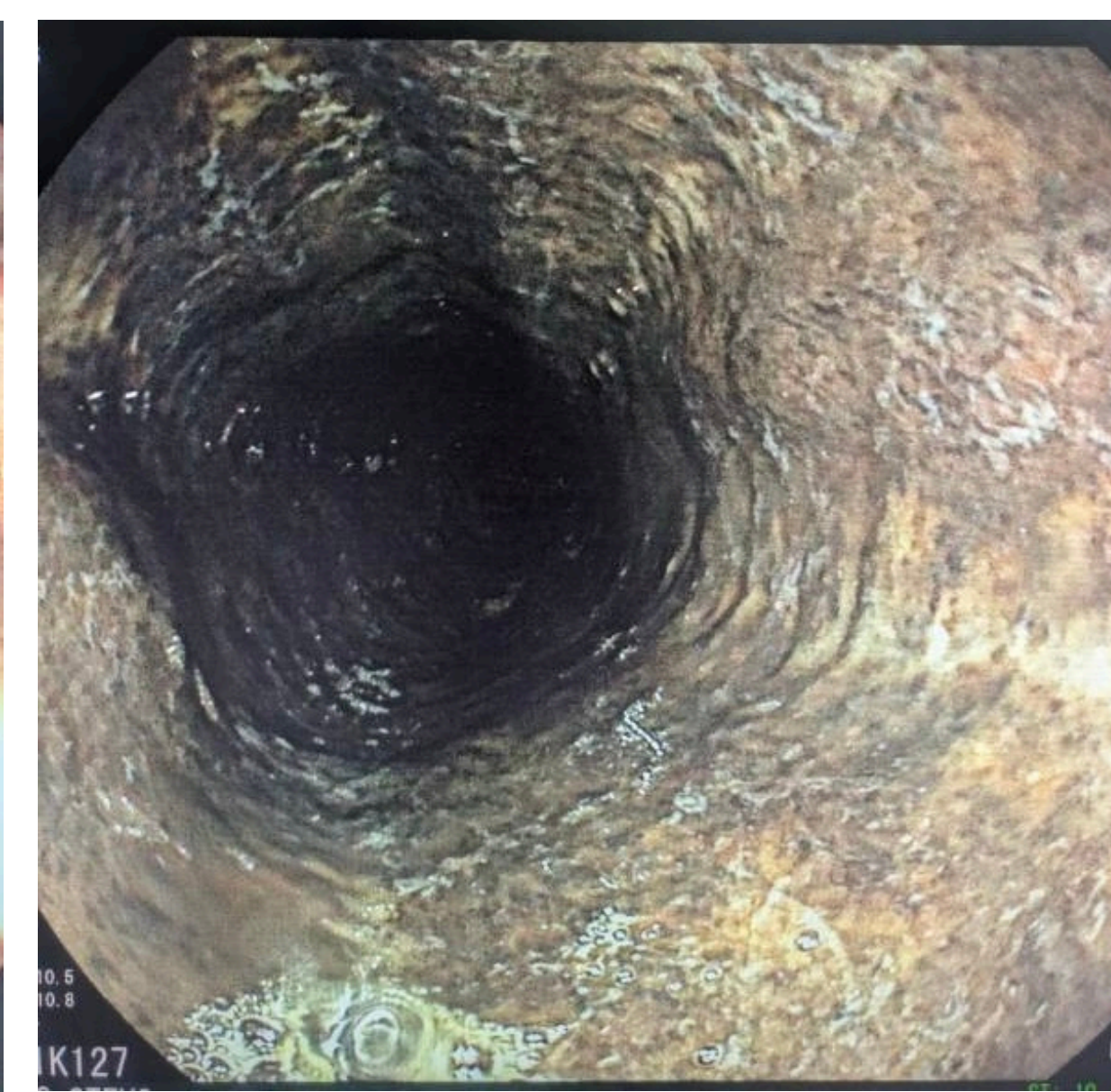


Figure 2: Urgent EGD showing diffuse black necrotic mucosa of the esophagus without active bleeding.



Treatment and outcome

- Conservatively treatment
- Proton pump inhibitors
- Parenteral nutrition
- Hydration



Conclusion

- ANE is a rare diagnosis usually established endoscopically
- CT plays a key role in evaluating disease extent and excluding complications, which significantly influences therapeutic decision-making.



References

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