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Summary

INCREASING PREVALENCE OF INCIDENTAL ILEITIS FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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A retrospective study of 2164 colonoscopies found a significant increase in endoscopic and histologic terminal ileal inflammation in the period starting 2020 compared to before the Covid-19 pandemic, with rates rising from 0% to 5.8% for endoscopic ileitis and 3.4% to 11.4% for histologic abnormalities.

KEY POINTS

- Endoscopic ileitis increased from 0% (pre-2020) to 5.8% (2020 onward), while abnormal ileal histology rose from 3.4% to 11.4%, both statistically significant.
- All histologic subtypes increased significantly in the post-2020 period: active ileitis (2.8% to 9.9%), focal ileitis (1.5% to 6%), ulcerative ileitis (1.6% to 3.2%), and erosive ileitis (0.4% to 2.1%).
- Nineteen patients in the post-2020 period were diagnosed with Crohn's disease based on ileitis findings, compared to zero in the earlier period.
- The post-2020 period also showed improved procedural quality with higher ileum intubation rates (79.7% to 93.8%) and better bowel preparation (77.1% to 91.7%).
- Authors speculate the increase may relate to Covid-19 virus effects, immune system changes, or vaccination, and express concern that granulomatous inflammation similar to Crohn's disease may lead to misdiagnosis.

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