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Caught Under the Hook – A Case of Median Arcuate Ligament Syndrome

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MAL syndrome is a rare diagnosis and often a diagnosis of exclusion. Typically, MAL syndrome presents as a triad of abdominal pain, vomiting, and weight loss, known as Dunbar triad. However gastric ischemia is an uncommon presentation. Characteristically in celiac stenosis, there is a compensatory mechanism such as hypertrophy of distal arteries or formation of collaterals. Failure of these compensatory mechanisms can result in ischemic injury and gastric pneumatosis. Evidence of gastric pneumatosis, although alarming, has not been a sign of morbidity, and requires further clinical correlation. Failure of acid suppression therapy and atypical sites of gastric ulcers, should raise concerns for celiac artery stenosis. Treatment typically results in resolution of symptoms and successful outcomes. The ideal treatment approach is based on patient's presentation and severity of stenosis. Numerous therapeutic approaches are available including vascular reconstruction, ligament release, and endovascular stenting.