Chyle leak: A rare complication post-hemithyroidectomy. Case Report and Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Background: Thyroidectomy is one of the common neck surgeries. Well recognized complications include, postoperative bleeding, hypocalcemia and recurrent laryngeal nerve injury. Chyle leak post thyroidectomy is extremely rare. Most of the reported cases have had a complete central compartment neck dissection.

Methods and results: This is a case report of a patient who suffered from chyle leak after a left hemithyroidectomy without a complete central compartment neck dissection. The patient was managed conservatively with low fat diet and observation. A protocol for approaching thyroid patients with chyle leak is proposed based on a comprehensive literature review.

Conclusion: Chyle leak post thyroidectomy for a benign disease is a very rare complication. Nevertheless, head and neck surgeons should consider it in the differential diagnosis of neck swelling post thyroidectomy.

Key words: Chyle, Thyroidectomy, Benign, Neck, Dissection