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Therapeutic Approach and Prevention in Recurrent Acute Biliary Pancreatitis

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Context Acute biliary pancreatitis (ABP) is caused by alteration of the papillary patency. **Objective** Normal transpapillar flux and cleaning of the common biliary duct (CBD) may prevent potentially avoidable recurrent pancreatitis. **Methods** In the period from September 1999 to December 2011 we treated 276 ABP (60 severe, 216 mild/moderate): 188 (72%) with first attack and 73 (28%) with recurrent ABP (second or further attack). Patients with recurrent pancreatitis had not undergone, in previous hospital stay elsewhere, the evaluation and, if necessary, treatment of papillary obstacle and/or CBD stones or sludge. In our hospital all patients underwent the treatment of ABP completed with cholecystectomy. All patients, after discharge, were introduced in a follow-up program (clinical and US control) after 180 days and 1 year. **Results** In the follow-up of recurrent pancreatitis we controlled 42 patients (57%; 31 lost). Follow-up results showed, beside the absence of recurrent acute episodes, stable normalization of laboratory cholestasis tests and US control. The same controls in 90 patients (48%) with a first attack of acute pancreatitis resulted normal in absence of a new acute episode. **Conclusions** Recurrent ABP is caused by persistent papillary obstacle. Therefore, we confirm therapeutic validity of instrumental control (US/MRCP) and possible treatment of papillary or biliary lithiasis obstacle for prevention of recurrent ABP.