

**Title:**  
**Chinese dragon sign of ulcerative colitis**

**Authors:**  
Akira Hokama, Atsushi Iraha

DOI: 10.17235/reed.2022.9154/2022

Link: [PubMed \(Epub ahead of print\)](#)

Please cite this article as:

Hokama Akira, Iraha Atsushi. Chinese dragon sign of ulcerative colitis. Rev Esp Enferm Dig 2022. doi: 10.17235/reed.2022.9154/2022.

*This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication. As a service to our customers we are providing this early version of the manuscript. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.*

## Chinese dragon sign of ulcerative colitis

Akira Hokama<sup>1</sup>, and Atsushi Iraha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Endoscopy,

<sup>2</sup>Department of Medicine #1,

Graduate School of Medicine, University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan

Keywords: Chinese dragon sign, ulcerative colitis

Correspondence to Akira Hokama, MD, PhD.

Department of Endoscopy, Graduate School of Medicine, University of the Ryukyus,  
207 Uehara, Nishihara, Okinawa 903-0215, Japan

Tel: +81-98-895-1144

Fax: +81-98-895-1414

E-mail: hokamaakira@gmail.com

Dear Editor,

We present a case of a 17-year-old woman with ulcerative colitis (UC) presented with abdominal pain and hematochezia. On examination, there was tenderness on the lower abdomen. A CT scan showed active colorectal inflammation (Fig. 1A), resembling a mythical wingless serpentine creature with four legs in Chinese mythology (Fig. 1B),

so called the Chinese dragon sign.<sup>1,2</sup> A diagnosis of exacerbation of distal UC was made with the endoscopic confirmation (Fig. 1C). The patient resolved with prednisolone.

The Chinese dragon sign refers to tortuous thick-walled sigmoid colon and rectum with narrow lumen resembles the body of the dragon and hypervascularity of the involved mesenteric vessels as bright dots next to the outer wall resemble the legs and skin spikes.<sup>1,2</sup> Although this sign is nonspecific and may appear in ischemic colitis, ischemic colitis usually does not have rectal involvement and can be differentiated from typical UC. The sign is originally the appearance of tortuous calcified splenic artery detected by radiography and CT.<sup>3</sup>

#### References

1. Hokama A, Maruwaka S, Hoshino K, et al. The reversed question mark sign and the dragon sign of ulcerative colitis. *J Gastroenterol Hepatol Res* 2013;2:429-30.
2. Xiang H, Han J, Ridley WE, et al. Chinese dragon sign: ulcerative colitis. *J Med Imaging Radiat Oncol* 2018;62 Suppl 1:63.
3. Ramanathan S. Chinese dragon sign: splenic artery calcification. *Abdom Radiol (NY)* 2019;44:2945-6.

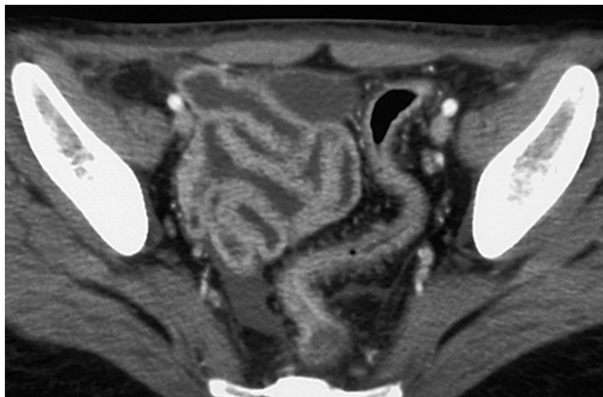


Figure 1A



Figure 1B

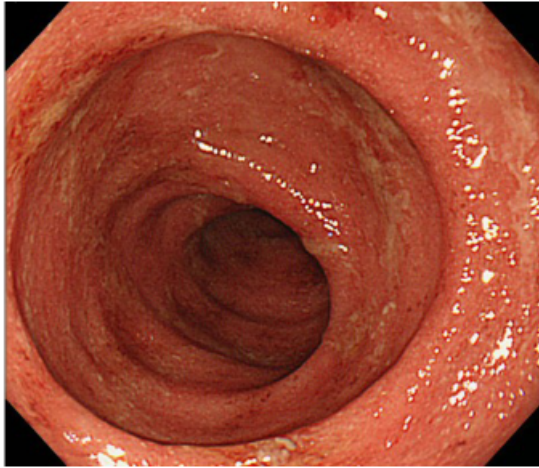


Figure 1C

Fig. 1A. An enhanced axial CT scan showed tortuous thick-walled sigmoid colon and rectum with narrow lumen resembles the body of the dragon and hypervascularity of the involved mesenteric vessels resemble the legs and spikes, so called the Chinese dragon sign. The close ileal wall in the right side of the pelvis appeared hyperemic but without mesenteric hypervascularity.

Fig. 1B. A silhouette image of the Chinese dragon. Source:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese\\_black\\_dragon.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chinese_black_dragon.svg) (Accessed August 27, 2022. This figure is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike

3.0 License).

Fig. 1C. Sigmoidoscopy revealed Mayo score grade 3 inflammation with multiple erosion, yellow-whitish exudates, and edematous mucosa consistent with usual exacerbation of ulcerative colitis.