A 14-year-old girl presented with sudden onset abdominal pain and distension with bilious vomiting. She had no significant prior history or weight loss. On examination, bowel sounds were normal. She was noted to have a typical marfanoid habitus with severe kyphoscoliosis (figure 1), arachnodactyly, positive thumb and wrist sign. Echocardiogram showed mitral valve prolapse, tricuspid regurgitation and normal-sized aortic root. Laboratory investigations were normal. Barium study showed dilated proximal duodenum and an abrupt cutoff near the spine (figure 2). On endoscopy, the third part of the duodenum could not be negotiated, where pulsations of superior mesenteric artery (SMA) were seen anteriorly. A diagnosis of SMA syndrome (SMAS) was confirmed. A trial of conservative management failed and a retrocolic side-to-side duodenojejunostomy was performed. Unlike classical SMAS, the duodenum was trapped between the spine and SMA. Postoperatively, the child remained asymptomatic at 1-year follow-up.

SMAS is a rare cause of duodenal obstruction secondary to compression by the SMA. It has not been reported in Marfan syndrome (MFS) earlier, where gastrointestinal complications are noted to be rare. SMAS can present with acute symptoms, as in the present case, or with chronic nonspecific postprandial abdominal pain or fullness, vomiting or early satiety, leading to a diagnostic dilemma. Asthenic build, rapid weight loss and spinal deformities are major risk factors for SMAS. In children with scoliosis coupled with adolescent skeletal growth, the aortomesenteric angle may become narrow, leading to a risk of SMAS. Moreover, MFS patients are underweight, and thus, may have less periduodenal fat to cushion and protect the duodenum in the SMA angle. Thus, the present case elicits the unusual causal association between these two syndromes.
Figure 1  Clinical photograph showing severe kyphoscoliosis in a patient with marfanoid habitus.

Viral Jain,1 Arbinder Kumar Singal,2 Chithra Ramu,3 Krithiya Devi Raghunaathan4

1Department of Pediatrics, MGM University of Health Sciences, Kamothe, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
2Department of Pediatric Surgery, MGM University of Health Sciences, Kamothe & MGM’s New Bombay Hospital, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
3Department of General Surgery, PSG Institute of Medical Sciences, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India
4Department of Pediatrics, PSG Institute of Medical Sciences, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India

Correspondence to Dr Arbinder Kumar Singal, Department of Pediatric Surgery, MGM University of Health Sciences, Kamothe & MGM’s New Bombay Hospital, RH-5, O-26, Sector-7, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra 400703, India; arbinders@gmail.com

Contributors All the authors were equally responsible in the diagnosis and management of the case. Additionally, VJ was responsible for manuscript writing and literature review. AS was responsible for manuscript writing and critical manuscript review. CR was responsible for literature review and KDR contributed in manuscript writing.

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