A 69-year-old man with a history of gastric ulcer and hypertension presented to the emergency department complaining of a sudden onset of epigastric pain and vomiting some coffee-ground fluid. The patient appeared to be in distress. His blood pressure was 82/64 mm Hg, and his heart rate was 79 bpm. On physical examination, his upper abdomen was tender with guarding, and we heard diffuse hypoactive bowel sounds. The chest radiograph was unremarkable. A supine abdominal radiograph showed a large, soft-tissue-density central mass that had peripheral calcification with loss of the right-side margin and right psoas border unvisualized (Figure 1). The overall findings indicated a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm. This conclusion was confirmed by contrast-enhanced computed tomography showing a large aortic aneurysm (≈9 cm in diameter and 12 cm in length) with a disruption over the right cephalad side that was a massive retroperitoneal hematoma (Figures 2 and 3). The patient received emergent abdominal aortic grafting quickly and subsequently recovered well 2 weeks later.

Although elderly patients with ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysms and hypotension might present atypical symptoms,1 if we could search the particular abdominal radiographs carefully for a large central mass, peripheral calcifications of the mass, loss of part of the mass margin, and loss of one or both psoas outlines, the diagnosis could be correct in 90% of these patients.2

Disclosures
None.

References
Figure 3. Coronal view of contrast-enhanced computed tomography shows a large abdominal aortic aneurysm 9 cm in diameter and 12 cm in length with peripheral calcification and a rupture of the aneurysm over the right cephalad side (arrow) with massive retroperitoneal hemorrhage. In addition, an intra-aortic thrombus and a large hepatic cyst were noted.
Radiographic Findings of a Ruptured Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm
Ding-Kuo Chien, Wen-Han Chang and Yu-Hang Yeh

Circulation. 2010;122:1880-1881
doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.972018

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/122/18/1880

Permissions: Requests for permissions to reproduce figures, tables, or portions of articles originally published in Circulation can be obtained via RightsLink, a service of the Copyright Clearance Center, not the Editorial Office. Once the online version of the published article for which permission is being requested is located, click Request Permissions in the middle column of the Web page under Services. Further information about this process is available in the Permissions and Rights Question and Answer document.

Reprints: Information about reprints can be found online at:
http://www.lww.com/reprints

Subscriptions: Information about subscribing to Circulation is online at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org//subscriptions/