QUESTION 84

Ascaris lumbricoides is a common worm infestation in the developing world. Which one of the following syndromes would be most characteristic of this infection?
A. Eosinophilic meningitis.
B. Cholangitis.
C. Painless rectal bleeding.
D. Migratory rash.
E. Perianal itch.

Ascaris lumbricoides, an intestinal roundworm, is one of the most common helminthic human infections worldwide. In the US ascariasis is the third most frequent Helminth infection, exceeded only by hookworm and Trichuris trichiura (whipworm). A.l lumbricoides is the largest intestinal nematode of man.

Transmission mainly via ingestion of water or food (raw vegetables of fruit in particular) contaminated with A. lumbricoides eggs and occasionally via inhalation of contaminated dust.

Clinical features: the majority of infections with A. lumbricoides are asymptomatic. However, the burden of symptomatic disease worldwide is still relatively high because of the high prevalence of the disease. Clinical disease is largely restricted to individuals with a high worm load. When symptoms do occur, they relate either to the larval migration stage or to the adult worm intestinal stage. Pathophysiologic mechanisms include:
- Direct tissue damage
- The immunologic response of the host to infection with larvae, eggs or adult worms
- Obstruction of an orifice or the lumen of the GI tract by an aggregation of worms
- Nutritional sequelae of infection

Symptoms and complications
- Pulmonary and hypersensitivity manifestations
  o Pneumonitis
  o Urticaria
- Intestinal symptoms
  o Abdominal discomfort, anorexia, nausea and diarrhoea
  o Heavy infections – impaired absorption of dietary proteins, lactose and Vit A
- Intestinal obstruction
  o Commonly at the ilocelecal valve – colicky abdominal pain, vomiting and constipation
- Hepatobiliary and pancreatic symptoms
  o Symptoms related to the migration of adult worms into the biliary tress can cause abdominal pain, biliary colic, acalculous cholecystitis, ascending cholangitis, obstructive jaundice, or bile duct perforation with peritonitis
  o In endemic countries such as India, ascariasis has been found to cause up to one-third of biliary and pancreatic disease

So from the choices above answer B cholangitis only clearly defined syndrome.