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LIVER AND PANCREAS FOCUSED ISSUE

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IMAGE OF THE MONTH

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Key words: liver, anatomic variation, surgery, beaver tail liver

- The case report was approved by the Ethics Committee of Hospital General Universitario Dr. Balmis. Alicante (Spain).
- Written consent was obtained from patient.
- This manuscript includes one image. Castor image was done by ChatGPT
- Manuscript word count: 306

Beaver tail liver

A 33-year-old woman underwent magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography following an episode of acute pancreatitis associated with transient elevation of liver function tests. Axial T2-weighted magnetic resonance imaging demonstrated an unusual elongation of the left hepatic lobe (BTL) extending into the left upper quadrant and wrapping around the spleen (S) (Fig. 1A). This characteristic appearance corresponds to a beaver tail liver, a rare anatomical variant also known as the "sliver of liver". The spleen is almost surrounded by normal hepatic parenchyma, creating a configuration that resembles the broad, flattened tail of a beaver (Fig. 1B).

BTL results from excessive lateral extension of segments II and III of the liver. Although this variation is usually asymptomatic and discovered incidentally on imaging studies, awareness of it is clinically important. Because the elongated hepatic tissue may have similar density or echogenicity to the spleen, it can be mistaken for perisplenic fluid, splenic subcapsular hematoma, or splenic injury, particularly in the setting of abdominal trauma. Identification of portal or hepatic venous branches within the tissue helps establish the correct diagnosis.

In addition, failure to recognize this variant may complicate upper abdominal surgery, interventional radiology procedures, or image-guided biopsies. Rarely, patients may report discomfort or pain in the left upper quadrant due to the unusual anatomical relationship between the liver and spleen.

Although no treatment is required, knowledge of this uncommon variant may prevent diagnostic errors and avoid unnecessary interventions. The present image illustrates a classic example of beaver tail liver, a fascinating anatomical curiosity with important implications for surgeons and radiologists.

Learning points: Beaver tail liver is a rare anatomical variant characterized by the lateral extension of the left

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hepatic lobe around the spleen. Recognition of this entity is important because it may mimic splenic pathology on imaging studies and may alter surgical planning in the left upper abdomen.

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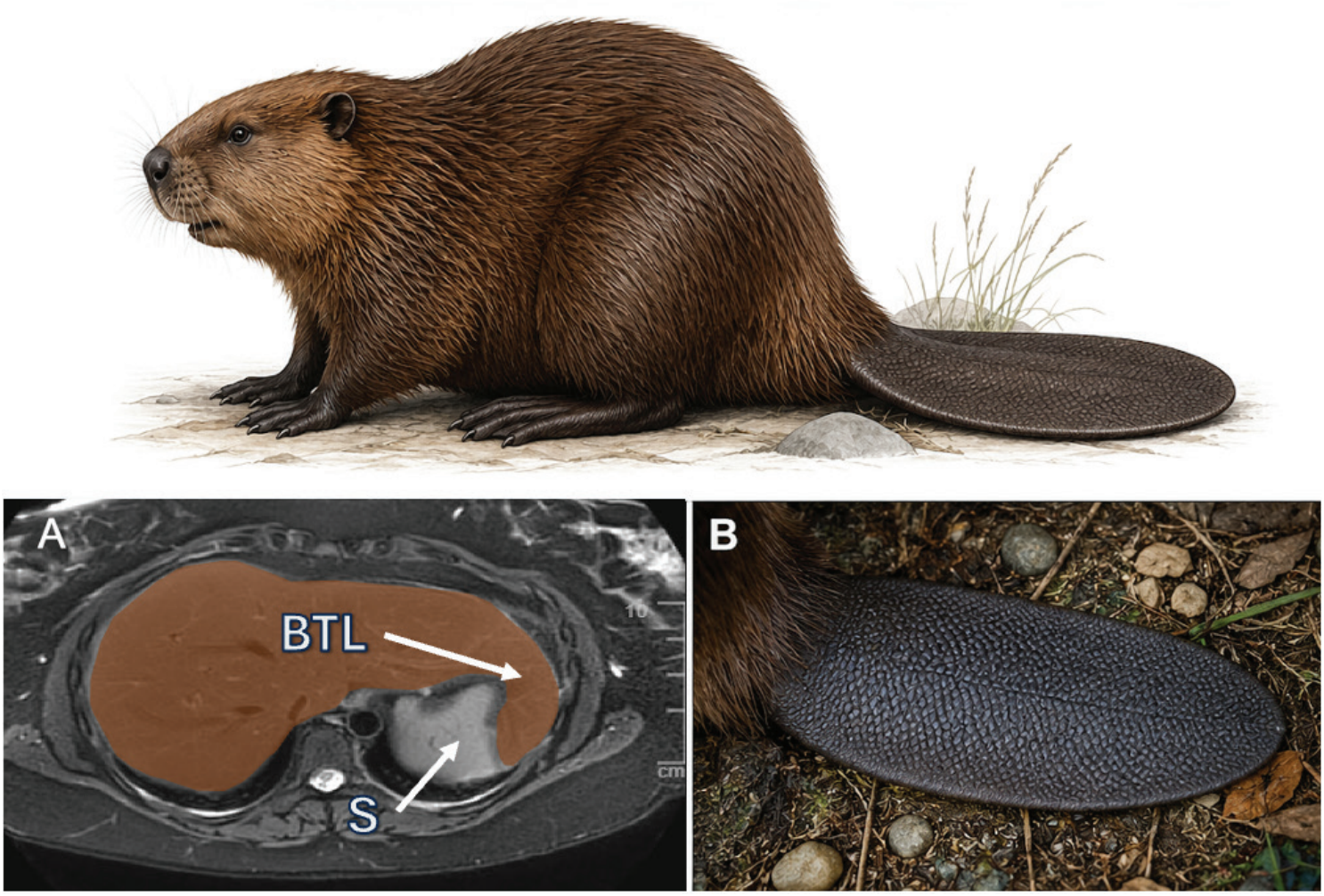


Figure 1:
A: MRI: BTL: beaver tail liver; S: Spleen; **B:** beaver tail explaining the reason of the etimology of the liver anatomical variation name