

**DEFINITION**

1. Achalasia is a term meaning chronic and progressive obstruction to the passage of contents through the lower oesophageal sphincter.

**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

2. The condition presents as dysphagia, sometimes associated with pain, occurring both with fluids and with solids. The oesophagus becomes dilated and elongated and acts as a reservoir of unassimilated nutrient. Spillage from this reservoir into the airway may result in aspiration pneumonia, which is an uncommon presentation of achalasia.

**AETIOLOGY**

3. The condition results from failure of relaxation of the oesophageal sphincter. It occurs in middle or late adult life and the aetiology is unknown except in Latin America where achalasia may be one manifestation of Chagas' disease.
4. Rarely, early achalasia may be the presenting manifestation of a diffuse enteric neuropathy which will progress to chronic intestinal pseudo-obstruction.

**CONCLUSION**

5. Achalasia is a disorder of the oesophagus which results in obstruction. No cause has been identified.

**REFERENCES**

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