Abdominal Pain «Without a Good Reason»
Think Acute Hepatic Porphyria!

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Acute hepatic porphyrias (AHP) are inborn errors of metabolism. They affect the synthesis of the red blood dye «heme» in the liver. In the liver, heme is essential to neutralize toxins and break down pharmaceutical drugs. In the healthy liver in case of a higher demand, e.g., drug intake, more heme is produced. In such instances precursors of heme accumulate in AHP sufferers.

• Acute hepatic porphyrias are (not so…) rare metabolic disorders affecting adult carriers
• Massive abdominal pain, sometimes accompanied by dark reddish / brown urine, is the main manifestation of an acute porphyria attack
• Untreated, the acute attack can become disabling and life threatening
• Triggers include commonly used pharmaceutical drugs, stress, lack of carbohydrates, anesthetics
• A simple and specific urine test can support the diagnosis

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In the healthy liver:

Support!

...however, I am equally important in the liver! There, I help neutralize toxins and break down pharmaceutical drugs

How to diagnose: In the symptomatic phase, the substances aminolevulinic acid and porphobilinogen are massively elevated in the urine. Abnormally colored urine can be a sign of an acute attack.

Acute Hepatic Porphyrias

If an acute hepatic porphyria is suspected, please consult with a national porphyria reference center:
European Porphyria Network: www.porphyria.eu
The Porphyrias Consortium: www.rarediseasesnetwork.org/cms/porphyrias

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