Images in cardio-thoracic surgery

Post-traumatic pericardial rupture

Pascal Thomas*, Christophe Doddoli, Roger Giudicelli, Pierre Fuentes

Department of Thoracic Surgery, Université Méditerranée (Aix-Marseille II) School of Medicine, Sainte Marguerite Hospital, 270 Boulevard Sainte Marguerite, 13274 Marseille Cedex 9, France

Received 19 April 2001; received in revised form 8 May 2001; accepted 11 May 2001

A 44-year-old male was involved as a belted driver in a head-on car collision. The chest CT-scan was suggestive of pericardial rupture (Fig. 1). Chest tube drainage did not improve the hemodynamic instability, and a left thoracotomy was performed. The heart was reintegrated and a 10 cm pericardial tear located at its junction with the diaphragm was repaired by interrupted sutures.

Fig. 1. Chest CT-scan showing a bilateral pneumothorax (due to a lung laceration caused by rapid deceleration) associated with a pneumopericardium and a herniated heart.