A huge aortic arch aneurysm mimicking massive pulmonary artery embolism

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An 85-year-old man, who had previously undergone coronary bypass surgery, was subjected to a computed tomography (CT) scan because of an echocardiographic suspect of massive pulmonary embolism. A huge aortic arch aneurysm compressed the pulmonary arteries (Fig. 1). Sudden cardio-respiratory failure required mechanical ventilation. At this stage, surgeons considered him inoperable for high risk. He died of multi-organ failure.

Fig. 1. Multi-detector computed tomography scan of thorax, transversal (A) and sagittal (B) plane. The exam demonstrated an extrinsic severe compression of the main (black arrow) and left pulmonary artery (white arrow) by the aortic aneurysm (An). The lumen of pulmonary arteries was seriously compromised, as showed by the thin line of contrast medium, haemodynamically mimicking a massive pulmonary embolism.