Retained surgical sponge presenting as a cardiac mass

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A 59-year old man was admitted to the emergency department with chest pain. He denied experiencing fever, breathlessness or cough. He had undergone coronary artery bypass surgery 4 years previously. Computed tomography showed a heterogeneous mass with wavy, striped areas (Fig. 1). Thoracotomy showed a foreign body. It proved to be a surgical sponge.

Figure 1: Axial (A) and coronal (B) chest computed tomography images with mediastinal window settings showing a low-density heterogeneous mass adjacent to the left cardiac border. The mass contained wavy, striped, high-density areas representing the presence of a retained surgical sponge.