Complete sternal destruction by tuberculosis

Khaled E. Al-Ebrahim*

Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

* Corresponding author. Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, King Abdulaziz University, PO Box 80215, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia. Tel: +966-26401000; fax: +966-26408347; e-mail: dr.k-e@hotmail.com (K.E. Al-Ebrahim).

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A 24-year old female was admitted with multiple discharging sternal sinuses involving the whole sternum. The cultures grew Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The chest computed tomography (CT) (Figs. 1 and 2) showed the complete destruction of the sternum and paraspinal collection. Triple antituberculosis treatment, surgical drainage of the sternal and spinal abscess and adequate nutrition resulted in the healing of the sternum.

Figure 1: Chest CT showing the complete sternal destruction with a gas-filled collection. This patient was immunocompromised secondary to malnutrition. The source of tuberculosis is usually the reactivation of latent foci formed during the haematogenous spread of the primary tuberculosis.

Figure 2: Chest CT showing the sternum totally destroyed and a huge paraspinal collection. Drainage followed by 9 months of a triple antituberculosis regimen (isoniazide, rifampicin and pyridoxine) resulted in sternal healing by fibrosis.