I shouldn’t be alive: bone marrow biopsy

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A 52-year old woman was referred for bone marrow biopsy. Active bleeding was seen when the trocar was removed. The biopsy needle was replaced (Fig. 1) and the patient referred for computed tomography (CT), which revealed an aortic injury (Fig. 2). Emergency sternotomy was performed; the lesion was repaired off-pump. The patient was discharged.

Figure 1: The trocar was left in place after two attempts at bone marrow biopsy. Median sternotomy was performed without removing the trocar. The aorta was repaired off-pump, by placing a purse-string suture around the biopsy needle.

Figure 2: CT shows injury of the anterior wall of the ascending aorta by the biopsy trocar. The patient was immediately transferred to a regional centre with cardiac surgery facilities.