Hypopharyngeal laceration with prevertebral dissection mimicking oesophageal perforation

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Received 22 October 2012; accepted 30 November 2012

Keywords: Hypopharyngeal • Oesophagus perforation • Thoracoscopy

A 30-year old man swallowed a ballpoint pen 2 days ago. Images were obtained and the pen was found in the upper mediastinum (Fig. 1A–C). We performed the timely and successful thoracoscopic removal of the mediastinal foreign body (Fig. 1D). The patient was discharged uneventfully.

Figure 1: (A) Chest radiography revealed a 1.5-cm radio-opaque density at the level of the T4-5 vertebrae. (B and C) Chest computed tomography demonstrated bilateral neck subcutaneous emphysema and pneumomediastinum with a tubular structure, 15 cm in length, in the cervical and upper thoracic oesophagus. (D) The upper posterior mediastinal pleura were opened, and a ballpoint pen was found between oesophagus and vertebral body.

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