Annular abscess leading to free wall rupture

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A 69-year old lady with a prior graft replacement of the ascending aorta presented with a Staphylococcus aureus graft infection and mitral valve endocarditis. An annular abscess opening in the pericardial sac was found (Fig. 1). Combined closure of the rupture was unsuccessful, and autopsy confirmed the diagnosis (Fig. 2).

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Figure 1: After dissection of pericardial adhesions from previous surgery, an annular abscess opening was found in the pericardial sac near the atrioventricular groove.

Figure 2: (A) Autopsy finding of large abscess in front of the atrioventricular groove. (B) Entrance of abscess in the mitral annulus in proximity to the anterior commissure (patch material from surgery has been removed). Mitral vegetations were excised at surgery, but annuloplasty was not performed due to heavy calcification of the mitral annulus and only mild mitral insufficiency.