Nail in the midbrain

Figure 1 CT angiogram showing the nail entering the midbrain just above the basilar bifurcation

Figure 2 The initial trajectory just above the circle of Willis

A 31-year-old man who had been shot with a nail gun was unresponsive at presentation, with unequal, nonreactive pupils. The frontal sinus and right frontal pole were debrided emergently. The 6.5-cm nail was left in the midbrain and cerebellar vermis. He extubated himself on day 3, was verbally responsive, and was alert but confused. CT angiogram showed the nail entering the midbrain just above the basilar bifurcation (figure 1), with its initial trajectory just above the circle of Willis (figure 2). One month later, he exhibited slow mentation, dysarthria, and internuclear ophthalmoplegia, but was infection free, fully awake, alert, oriented, and ambulating with assistance.

Tamara Lazic, MD, John Strugar, MD,* New Haven, CT*

**Both authors contributed equally.*

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Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. Tamara Lazic, Department of Internal Medicine, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520; tamara.lazic@yale.edu

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Tamara Lazic and John Strugar

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