Epidural and brain abscess following Pearl Spot fish bone injury

Figure CT/MRI composite

(A) Retropharyngeal radio-opaque foreign body. (B) Retropharyngeal space widening, cervical epidural collection, and posterior subcutaneous emphysema. (C) Axial CT image showing epidural and paravertebral emphysema. (D) Residual radio-opaque foreign body in the retropharyngeal space after upper gastrointestinal endoscopic extraction. (E) Upper vertebral osteomyelitis and mucosal track. (F) Epidural abscess anterior to the cervical spinal cord. (G) Axial T1-weighted contrast image shows enhancing lesion in the left peritrigonal area. (H) Two extracted pieces of Pearl Spot fish bone.

A 52-year-old woman developed headache, throat foreign body sensation, neck pain, and fever of 3 days duration 3 months after choking on a Pearl Spot fish bone (FB). CSF contained 2,200 cells, neutrophils (90%) with normal sugar and protein. Brain MRI showed possible occipital cerebritis (figure). CT neck revealed a retropharyngeal foreign body, abscess and emphysema, and a pharyngeal fistula. Spine MRI dem-

onstrated C2–3 osteomyelitis and epidural abscess (figure). The next day 2 pieces of FB were extracted from the upper esophagus. She died after 5 days. FB injury is common with unfileted Pearl Spot fish consumption. Retropharyngeal abscesses can extend into the vertebrae resulting in osteomyelitis or cervical epidural abscesses.^{1,2}

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Author contributions: B.V. Maramattom primarily wrote and edited the manuscript. B. Thomas performed and interpreted the radiologic studies and edited the manuscript.

The authors report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to Neurology.org for full disclosures.

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Neurology 2012;79:484-485

DOI 10.1212/WNL.0b013e3182617102

This information is current as of July 30, 2012

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