



Blunt Thoracic Aortic Injury on Emergency CT

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Clinical Image

A 26-year-old woman was brought to the emergency department for traffic accident. She was unconscious (Glasgow 3) but had a preserved pulse.

CT angiography showed a hypodense collection around the thoracic aorta (Figure 1A). A detailed view shows a saccular image on the thoracic aorta of 6 mm. This defect is located distal from the branch of the left subclavian artery (Figure 1B, 1C). No contrast extravasation was identified.

Most blunt injuries of the thoracic aorta occur at the aortic isthmus just distal to the left subclavian artery [1]. CT angiography of the chest is a highly sensitive and specific test for thoracic aortic injury [2]. A possible classification system for aortic injury is in four grades: Intimal tear (Type I), intramural hematoma (Type II), Pseudoaneurysm (Type III) and rupture (Type IV).

The final diagnosis was traumatic aortic pseudoaneurysm (Type III). An aortic prosthesis was placed and the patient evolved favorably.

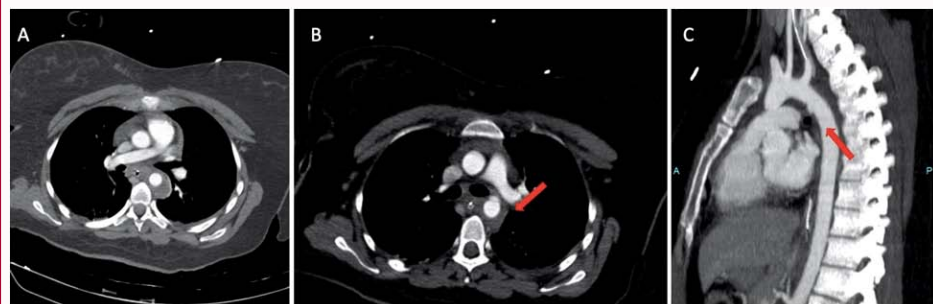


Figure 1: CT angiography of thoracic aorta.

References

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