

Lobe of the azygos vein

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Azygos lobe is a congenital malformation due to an alteration in the embryonic development of the azygos vein; in its descent towards the chest, it drags with it a portion of visceral pleura and penetrates the right upper lobe (RUL), generating an anomalous fissure (azygos fissure) which delimits the accessory lobe. It is expressed

radiographically by a triangular image known as the *trigonum parietale*, located on the upper chest inner wall, followed by a curvilinear shadow that extends obliquely through the RUL and ends in a tear-shaped shadow, at a variable distance above the right hilum, caused by the azygos vein itself. In

thoracic computed tomography it is seen as a line that crosses the RUL from back to front, and the azygos vein itself can even be seen within, leading to the superior vena cava. In patients with this disorder, the arch of the azygos vein is located in a more cephalic position than usual, near the junction of the brachiocephalic vessels. This is a common congenital anomaly (1 in 100-200 anatomical samples, 0.4-0.5% of chest radiographs).

Azygos lobe is an incidental finding without clinical significance except that it may be the only factor limiting the spread of disease from the adjacent lung segment.

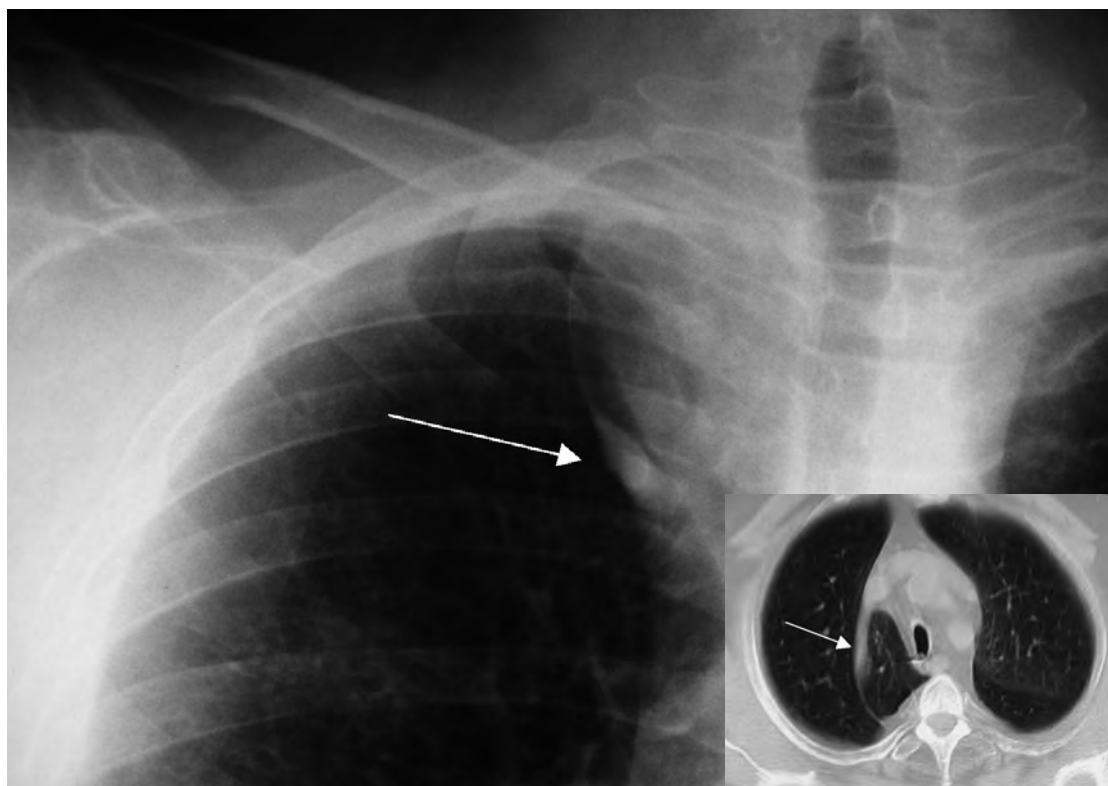


Figure 1. Detail of the chest X-ray showing the azygos lobe (arrow), which is clearly seen on computed tomography (bottom right, arrow).

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RECEIVED: 22-7-2008. **ACCEPTED:** 2-9-2008.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None.