
IMAGES

Massive subcutaneous emphysema secondary to chest trauma

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A 79 year-old man was referred to the emergency department (ED) of our hospital with facial and chest trauma. The day before he had had an accidental fall while walking, and received attention on the scene. The following morning he had chest, face and neck edema and discrete dysphagia, for which he went to the ED. On arrival he was conscious, oriented, hemodynamically stable and eupneic. Physical examination revealed marked subcutaneous emphysema of the face, neck,

chest and upper limbs. Chest x-ray (Figure 1) showed air in the soft tissue compatible with subcutaneous emphysema and the patient was admitted to hospital for further study. Cranial and thoracic CT scan showed massive subcutaneous emphysema, minimal right pneumothorax and pneumomediastinum (Figure 2). The patient evolved well after percutaneous drainage of the emphysema and conservative treatment of the other lesions.



Figure 1. Chest x-ray.



Figure 2. Chest CT scan showing subcutaneous emphysema (long white arrows), right pneumothorax (short white arrow) and pneumomediastinum (dark arrow).

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