

Pneumopericardium After Surgical Pericardial Drainage

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Pneumopericardium is the presence of air in the pericardial cavity and it is not a frequent clinical finding in cardiology or in the postoperative of cardiovascular surgery. The images that are presented correspond to a 50 year-old patient who underwent an aortic valve replacement with extracorporeal circulation due to severe aortic stenosis. He was re admitted due to decay and pale skin symptoms. Cardiac tamponade due to severe pericardial drainage was diagnosed, and it was surgically drained through pericardial window. Once the mediastinum drainage was removed, a thorax x-ray showing presence of pneumopericardium

was performed. The echocardiogram resulted totally insubstantial. The patient was asymptomatic, so daily radiographs were performed, and after 8 days the total reduction was observed.

An inadequate technique of mediastinum drainage removal produced the air intake. When removing drainage, the patient's collaboration is necessary; if he inhales during the removal, the unwanted air intake can occur. The pneumopericardium in the postoperative of cardiac surgery is in general asymptomatic and it does not need treatment. (1) Tension pneumopericardium is not frequent in these patients. (2)

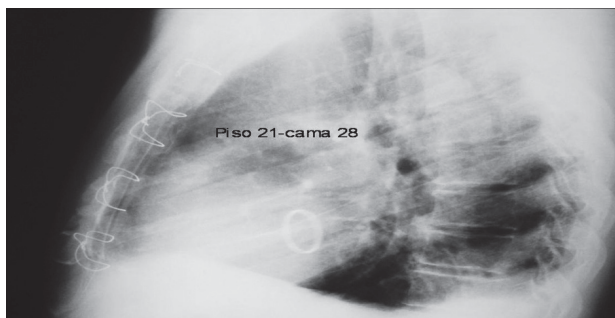


Fig. 1 and 2. Radiolucent area in the left lateral edge of the cardiac silhouette and in the basal posterior area of the corresponding heart, with air in pericardial space.

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