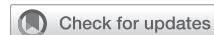


See Article page 358.



Commentary: Arkansas toothpick

Keith B. Allen, MD

In this edition of JTCVS Techniques, Weininger and colleagues¹ report a fascinating case of intracardiac polymethylmethacrylate cement embolism in a patient 1 week following an L5 kyphoplasty. Bone cement embolization to the heart through the venous system, while uncommon, likely occurs more frequently than reported. The novelty of this case is emphasized by the incredible video showing removal of what some familiar with Bowie knives would call an “Arkansas toothpick.” The etiology of the embolus likely occurred by accidental direct injection of the cement into a lumbar vein. While the cardiac team at Yale expertly managed this complication, dissemination of this complication to orthopedic surgeons would be important to highlight the potential dangers of polymethylmethacrylate cement that is commonly used in their procedures. This article should also remind cardiac surgeons that our field is not immune to substances such as bone wax embolizing, and the emergence of hemostatic sealants may have the same propensity.²



Keith B. Allen, MD

CENTRAL MESSAGE

Arkansas toothpick—a tale of cement gone astray.

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