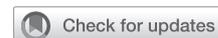


See Article page 358.



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.

References

1. Weininger G, Sekar RB, Eleftheriades JA. Intracardiac polymethylmethacrylate cement embolism. *J Thorac Cardiovasc Surg Tech.* 2021;10:358-60.
2. Robicsek F, Masters TN, Littman L, Born GVR. The embolization of bone wax from sternotomy incisions. *Ann Thorac Surg.* 1981;31:357-9.

From the Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery, St Luke's Hospital, St Luke's Mid America Heart Institute, Kansas City, Mo.

Disclosures: The author reported no conflicts of interest.

The *Journal* policy requires editors and reviewers to disclose conflicts of interest and to decline handling or reviewing manuscripts for which they may have a conflict of interest. The editors and reviewers of this article have no conflicts of interest.

Received for publication Sept 14, 2021; revisions received Sept 14, 2021; accepted for publication Sept 17, 2021; available ahead of print Sept 25, 2021.

Address for reprints: Keith B. Allen, MD, 4320 Wornall Rd, Medical Plaza II, Suite 50, Kansas City, MO 64111 (E-mail: kallen2340@aol.com).

JTCVS Techniques 2021;10:361
2666-2507

Copyright © 2021 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Inc. on behalf of The American Association for Thoracic Surgery. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xjtc.2021.09.035>