

Boerhaave's Syndrome Presenting as a Right-sided Pleural Effusion

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Abstract

Introduction: Boerhaave's syndrome is an uncommon condition where there is oesophageal rupture following forceful vomiting, subsequent mediastinitis and is associated with high mortality and morbidity in the absence of therapy. We present a case of Boerhaave's syndrome in a 79-year-old woman who developed a right-sided effusion, an unusual presentation. Clinical Picture: A 79-year-old woman developed a right-sided empyema and mediastinitis after a bout of repeated vomiting. Gastrograffin swallows and oesophago-gastro-duodenoscopy confirmed oesophageal rupture. Treatment: The patient was treated with antibiotics and a tube thoracostomy. An open thoracotomy, oesophagostomy and thoracic window was subsequently performed. Outcome: The oesophageal rupture was contained but patient died from postoperative complications. Conclusions: Physicians should have a high index of suspicion of oesophageal rupture when patients present with Meckler's triad of symptoms and especially when pleural fluid cultures grow bacteria native to the gastrointestinal tract.

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