Subcutaneous Emphysema and Pneumomediastinum after Endotracheal Anaesthesia

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Abstract

Introduction: We report a case of subcutaneous emphysema and pneumomediastinum that presented postoperatively after tracheal extubation. Clinical Picture: A 51-year-old man had an uneventful anaesthesia lasting about 6.5 hours. Intubation was performed by a very junior medical officer and was considered difficult. He developed sore throat, chest pain, numbness of both hands and palpable crepitus around the neck postoperatively. Chest X-ray revealed diffuse subcutaneous emphysema, pneumomediastinum and possible pneumopericardium. Treatment: He was treated conservatively with bed rest, oxygen, analgesia, antibiotic prophylaxis, reassurance and close monitoring. Outcome: The patient made an uneventful recovery. Conclusions: We discussed the possible causes.

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Key words: Anaesthetic technique, Complications, Pneumomediastinum, Subcutaneous emphysema, Tracheal intubation

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