A 20-year-old man presented with a 6-month history of intermittent chest pain. Initial imaging demonstrated approximately 15 sewing needles lodged in his myocardium, predominantly in the left ventricle. The patient has been referred to cardiothoracic surgery for further management. His progress will be monitored closely.
The patient denied any knowledge of how, or perhaps even why, the needles were lodged within his heart. Although many hypotheses remain, no single theory can completely explain this phenomenon.

Discussion

The finding of a sewing needle (or multiple needles, in some instances) in the mediastinum appears to be relatively uncommon compared with other foreign bodies, with approximately 160 such cases reported by the late 1980s.[1]

Hermoni et al.[2] published a case report in which a 24-year-old man presented to an emergency department with acute-onset, sharp chest pain. Chest radiographs revealed 12 sewing needles, some of which were visible within the cardiac silhouette. He required urgent surgery and was discharged within 15 days of hospitalisation.

Reported cases in the SA context are limited. One case reported by Sobnach et al.[3] involved an SA patient, with the striking difference being the mechanism of injury, which involved ingestion of the sewing needles with subsequent migration, as opposed to the transthoracic route in our patient. Their patient made a full recovery after a median sternotomy to remove the needles.[3]

Ours was a unique case that will require a complex approach to management, but was easily diagnosed by simple chest radiography. The case is a good example of the importance of being vigilant when encountering abnormal presentations of common complaints.

A follow-up report will be compiled and submitted for publication after our patient has been fully evaluated and managed by the cardiothoracic surgeons.


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