

Impacted foreign body in the left main bronchus

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Although most airway obstructions by a foreign body are described in paediatric care, it is not infrequent in adults. Most are spontaneously eliminated and it has been estimated that 10 % to 20 % of the cases require medical intervention and 1 % an endoscopic procedure. Most foreign bodies become impacted in the main right bronchus because of the lesser anatomic angle.

We present the case of a 28-year-old obese male who attended his outpatient clinic because of the sensation of a foreign body and mild dyspnoea after having swallowed a piece of clam shell from a paella and after violent coughing bloody

sputum was produced as well as the sensation of retrosternal burning. On suspicion of a foreign body in the lower airway he was referred to the hospital where a chest x-ray was performed and found to be normal (25%-50% are usually normal) and thoracic computerised tomography (CT) showed a foreign body in the main left bronchial (Figure 1). After carrying out the preoperative tests and in view of the anxiety of the patient, a fibrobronchoscopy was performed, achieving complete extraction without difficult. Posterior controls were normal and the clinical manifestations disappeared.

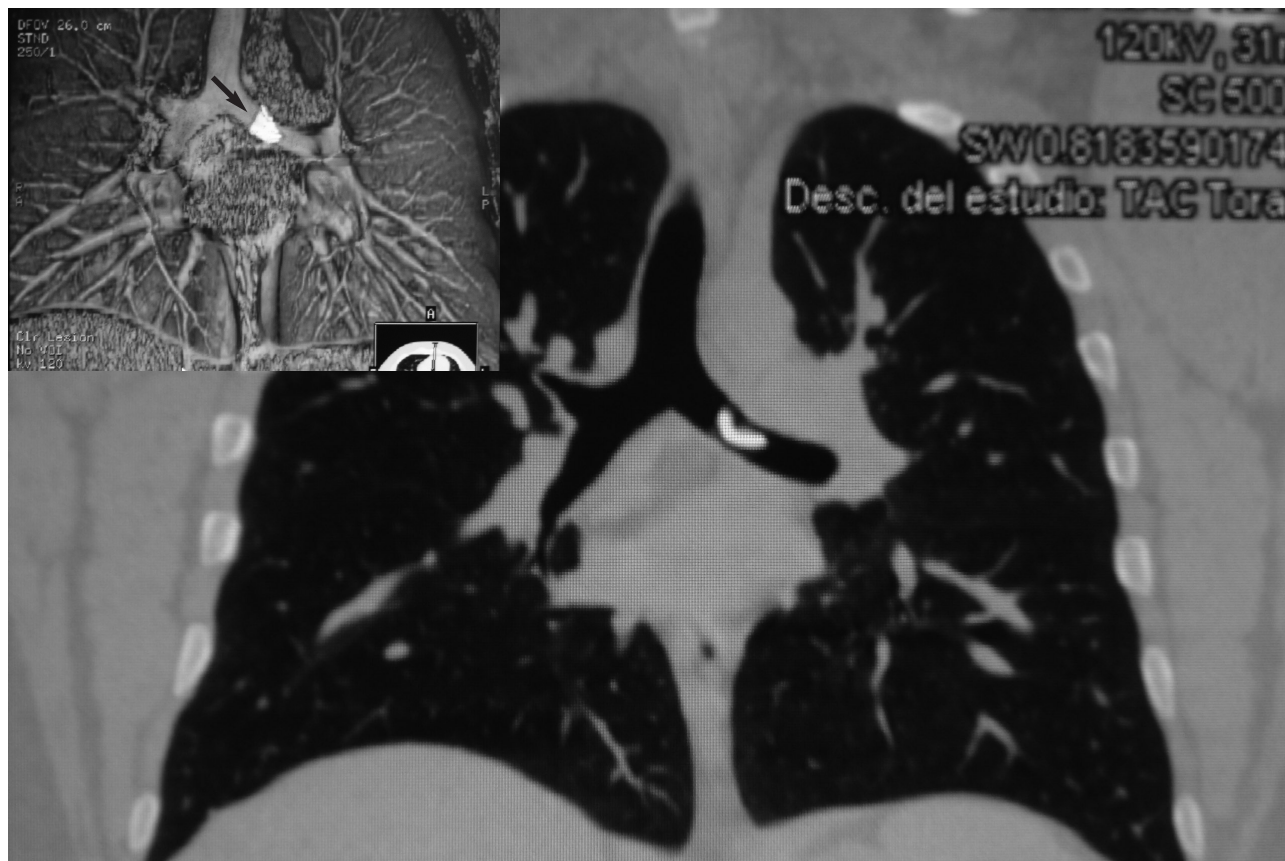


Figure 1. Foreign body impacted in the main left bronchus (arrows).

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