Case of the Month - Case 3/2000

M Joseph, J Nates

Citation

Abstract

CASE STUDY

This is a critically ill 24 year-old female patient, requiring a pulmonary artery (PA) catheter for hemodynamic management. Below are the 3 consecutive chest X rays, the first after a routine insertion of the PA catheter.

Figure 1

X-Ray 1

Figure 2

X-Ray 2
Question 1: What is your diagnosis?
A: The patient has developed a hemothorax due to rupture of the pulmonary artery, caused by the PA catheter.

Other potential complications due to use of a PA catheter include pneumothorax, arrhythmias, pulmonary infarction, sepsis and endocarditis, balloon rupture and subclavian artery injury.

Question 2: What is the incidence of this pathology?
A: Published reports range of pulmonary artery rupture as a complication of the PA catheter range from 0.001% to 0.47%. Postulated mechanisms include distal tip migration penetrating the wall during balloon deflation, overdistention of the balloon with fluid, and traction on an inflated, wedged balloon.

References
Author Information

Mathew Joseph, M.Ch.
Assistant Professor, Departments of Neurosurgery, The University of Texas-Houston, Health Science Center Medical School

Joseph L Nates, M.D.
Assistant Professor, Departments of Neurosurgery and Anesthesia-Critical Care Medicine, The University of Texas-Houston, Health Science Center Medical School