Cardiology

"Question mark" aorta

K M Chow, W H Fung, C C Szeto

Answers on p 123.

An 83 year old woman with dementia was admitted to our hospital with cough and febrile illness. Her past medical history included previous cholecystectomy and latent syphilis, for which she had a full course of penicillin treatment three years previously in another hospital. Examination revealed no aortic regurgitation. A routine chest radiograph (fig 1) showed a shadow at right lower lung field. A left lateral chest radiograph showed a tortuous thoracic aorta resembling a question mark (fig 2).

QUESTIONS

- (1) What is the most likely diagnosis and how do you confirm your suspicion?
- (2) What are the other manifestations of this condition in the same system?

- (3) What are the principles of management in this condition?

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Figure 1 Plain chest radiograph with abnormal shadow (arrow).

Figure 2 Plain radiograph (lateral view) of the chest, showing a "question mark" aorta.

Authors' affiliations

K M Chow, W H Fung, C C Szeto,
Department of Medicine & Therapeutics, The
Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong
Kong, China

Correspondence to: Dr C C Szeto, Department
of Medicine and Therapeutics, The Chinese
University of Hong Kong, Prince of Wales
Hospital, Shatin, Hong Kong;
ccszeto@cuhk.edu.hk

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