Asymptomatic Left Lower Thoracic Mass

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This 23-year-old asymptomatic man, a nonsmoker, was admitted to the hospital because a round density was noted at the left lung base on a preemployment chest roentgenogram. Physical examination was normal. Figures 3 and 4 were obtained after induction of pneumoperitoneum.

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**Diagnosis: Pleuropericardial Cyst**

PA and left lateral teleroentgenograms (Fig 1 and 2) reveal a density adjacent to the anterior segment of the left hemidiaphragm. The lower left heart border is obliterated by the lesion. The pneumoperitoneogram (Fig 3 and 4) shows that the lesion is adjacent to the top of the left hemidiaphragm. A hernia sac is not demonstrated. Abdominal arteriography failed to reveal a vascular pedicle.

At operation, a smooth, thin walled cyst measuring 8 x 6 x 3 cm was found attached to the apex of the pericardium and to the left hemidiaphragm. It did not communicate with the pericardial sac and was easily removed. The cyst contained clear fluid and its lining was composed of mesothelial cells and fibrous connective tissue.

Pleuropericardial cyst, also known as spring water cyst, pericardial coelomic cyst, and hydrocele of the mediastinum, represents failure of the process of separation of the pleura from the pericardium. It is usually discovered on routine chest roentgenogram in asymptomatic patients, more often young men.

The cysts are benign, smooth, thin-walled, rarely multiloculated (10 percent), and relatively avascular. Communication with the pericardial cavity is rare. The most common site is the right anterior cardiophrenic angle. They are easily resected. Failure to incorporate surrounding tissues and absence of multiloculation differentiate them from cystic hygroma. The cyst is filled with a clear watery transudate which contains a small amount (195-400 mg percent) of protein.

**References**


**Finny Gluttons of the Sea**

Fishermen who harbor in Seattle's Salmon Bay do not think it very strange that a hundred pound fish should produce a dozen chunks of gold-bearing quartz or a full can of condensed milk. A cannery man in Ketchikan, Alaska, told of finding pieces of sail canvas, iron chain links in fish stomachs. He considers his queerest find a small hymn book printed in Russian. A sport fisherman who opened a big Tyee salmon caught in the Campbell River on Vancouver Island found a half-consumed cigar in its stomach. Bracelets, necklaces and even diamonds have been recovered from fish and the boats have brought to port such strange fish fare as a box of cartridges, a common table tumbler and a Mexican sombrero. The United States Bureau of Fisheries has records of fish that have swallowed ducks, mudhens and shore birds caught napping or disabled on the surface of the sea.

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