Clinical Information


Answer: SUPERNUMERARY TRACHEAL LOBE

The supernumerary lobe is one of the rarest anomalies of the chest. However, more and more cases have been reported with the recent advances in thoracic surgery and the increased use of the bronchoscope and bronchography. The tracheal bronchus is seen in many mammals, such as the pig and sheep, but in man, this is an anomaly. According to Foster-Carter, the following nomenclature is used: if one of the segments or subsegments of the right upper lobe, usually the apical segment, is displaced onto the trachea, this is called a displaced bronchus. If the right upper lobe has all normal lobar segments, the tracheal lobe is called a supernumerary bronchus. The displaced bronchus is seen more often than the supernumerary bronchus, which is believed to be quite rare.

In the following case, the supernumerary bronchus arose three cen-
timeters above the main carina, posteriorly on the right side. The orifice of this lobe could be visualized with the right angle scope and would be easily missed if the trachea were not examined thoroughly with the right angle scope. All three orifices of the right upper lobe were well-visualized by the right angle scope and these segments can be seen easily in the bronchogram.

The tracheal lobe is not just of academic interest, as it has considerable importance to the thoracic surgeon in lobectomy and segmental resection. Occasionally, it is the source of bronchiectasis and other pathological changes. Epstein reported a case of bronchial adenoma in a supernumerary lobe and Holinger reported a case showing accessory tracheal bronchus leading to a congenital cyst. It is felt by the writer that this anomaly will be picked up more frequently with more diligent use of the right angle scope in bronchoscopic examinations.

**SELECTED REFERENCES**


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The Committee on Chest Roentgenology welcomes comments. We would also be pleased to receive x-ray films of exceptional interest with a brief history. Please submit material to: Benjamin Felson, M.D., Department of Radiology, Cincinnati General Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio.