Reviewer's report

Title: Pneumomediastinum as initial presentation of paralytic rabies: A case report

Version: 1 Date: 21 September 2005

Reviewer: nicholas Johnson

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper describes a case report where a young male admitted to hospital presented with pneumomediastinum of unknown origin. In the absence of classical symptoms, rabies was not considered a possible cause. This observation has been made in a previous report, which is acknowledged, but this paper is a timely reminder and draws attention to the condition as a possible manifestation of rabies infection. Overall, the paper is well written and provides a thorough account of this case. This reviewer would only suggest one major amendment and a series of minor changes to the text.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The report would benefit from a clear definition of pneumomediastinum for the non-clinical reader (i.e. free air or gas contained within the thoracic cavity) and mention some of the potential causes of the condition for the clinician (e.g. asthma, vomiting, excessive coughing or shouting).

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Pg1 Slight modification to the title “as” to at
2. Pg 2 Para 2 Line 7 “staffs” to staff
3. Pg 3 Para 1 Line 22 Define pneumomediastinum (see above)
4. Pg 4 Para 4 Line 3 “emphasized” to emphasize the manifestations of furious rabies in humans.
5. Pg 5 Para 2 Line 5 “reaction” to reactions
6. Pg 5 Para 3 Line 14 “in” to following a
7. Pg 5 Para 3 Line 15 “CT scan is” to CT scans are often
8. Pg 5 Para 6 Line 2 “exclude rabies and a” to exclude a rabies diagnosis. Greater
9. Pg 5 Para 6 Line 2 “early diagnosis would” to early diagnosis, in this particular case would
10. Pg 6 Para 1 Line 1 “comfort” to palliative care instead of unnecessary surgical intervention.
11. Pg 6 Para 1 Line 1 Delete final sentance

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

none

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.