

Palacos-angiography?

Unusual radiographic findings after cemented hip prostheses

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A 66-year-old woman had a total hip replacement because of arthrosis. The postoperative radiographs showed a thin 12-cm long thread-like shadow emerging from the medial femoral cortex and leading to the deep femoral vein. It was misinterpreted as being a radiopaque thread in a surgical sponge. The patient was reoperated, but no surgical sponge was found.

We believe that the surprising radiographic finding represents a "jetbeam" of acrylic-cement in the deep femoral vein system (v. nutriciae). Since then, we have had 4 more patients with similar postoperative radiographic findings.

Reference

Engesæter L B, Strand T, Raugstad T S, Husebø S, Langeland N. Effects of a distal venting hole in the femur during total hip replacement. Arch Orthop Trauma Surg 1984; 103: 328-31.

The thread-like shadows in the 66-year-old woman and in 2 of the other 4 cases.

Discussion

Modern cementing technique, including lavage, femoral canal plugging, cement injected with syringe system and compression, has been used in our department for the last 6 years. Engesæter et al. (1984) have shown that, with this technique, the pressure in the medullary canal may rise to 550 mmHg during the insertion of the femoral stem, and it must be at this stage the filling of cement in the v. nutriciae occurs. Surgeons should be aware that a "jetbeam" of acrylic-cement in a vein can be misinterpreted as being a forgotten surgical sponge.



