Images in cardio-thoracic surgery

An unusual cause of pulmonary embolism

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A 37-year-old man presented with haemoptysis and shortness of breath 4 weeks after percutaneous coil embolisation of varicocele. Imaging (Fig. 1) revealed embolisation of coil to the left lower lobe pulmonary artery with pulmonary infarction. Open coil retrieval was performed with revascularisation of the left lower lobe (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Embolised coil with associated clots formation retrieved via left thoracotomy. Catheter-based percutaneous retrieval was not possible due to the relatively chronic nature of the embolised coil causing it to be partially embedded in the vessel wall.

Fig. 1. (a) Chest X-ray showing the embolised coil in the left pulmonary artery. (b) Computer tomography with three-dimensional reconstruction revealed the position of the embolised coil in the left lower lobe pulmonary artery (black arrow).