Images in cardio-thoracic surgery

Cardiac dislocation after replacement of the descending aorta

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A 46-year-old male patient with post-traumatic aneurysm of the thoracic descending aorta underwent replacement of the affected segment over a left-sided thoracotomy. A postoperative X-ray revealed dislocation of the heart (Fig. 1).

A computed tomography (CT) scan was performed (Fig. 2). The patient was clinically asymptomatic. During the re-intervention, an old rupture of the pericardium could be identified.

Fig. 1. Postoperative chest X-ray shows complete dislocation of the heart into the right pleural cavity even though the pericardium was not opened during the surgery.

Fig. 2. CT scan confirming the X-ray results. The dislocated heart (\textsuperscript{1}) compresses the inferior vena cava (\textsuperscript{8}).