An unexpected cause of postoperative right heart failure

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Keywords: Heart valve • Resuscitation • Myocardial injury

Cardiac injury from cardiopulmonary resuscitation is a rare phenomenon. A 72-year-old women following elective mitral valve repair suffered cardiac arrest (pulseless electrical activity). Post-resuscitation transoesophageal echocardiogram (Fig. 1) revealed a rupture of the anterior papillary muscle of the tricuspid valve (Fig. 2). She underwent emergency tricuspid valve replacement with a successful outcome.

Figure 1: Intraoperative transoesophageal echocardiogram demonstrating a flail anterior tricuspid leaflet.

Figure 2: An anterior tricuspid leaflet with the avulsed papillary muscle seen through a longitudinal right atriotomy.