Abstract

Spontaneous contralateral pneumothorax after pneumonectomy is a rare condition. A high index of suspicion is required for a correct diagnosis. Management can be challenging, as surgical intervention, if necessary, is a very high risk procedure. Chemical pleurodesis can be a simple and effective measure in cases with no major air leak. We describe the case of a 21-year-old female with spontaneous pneumothorax in a single lung, which posed several diagnostic and therapeutic problems. The presence of a "buffalo chest" made the initial chest x-ray interpretation difficult. The patient had an important air leak without complete pulmonary expansion and thoracic surgery was considered of risk. Accordingly, instillation of talc slurry through one of the thoracic drains was undertaken with eventual resolution. We are convinced that broncho-pleural fistula resolution was facilitated by slurry talc, despite complete lung expansion never having been achieved.

Keywords

Pneumothorax, pneumonectomy, buffalo-chest, air-leak, slurry talc.