Air-fluid Levels in Lucite-ball Plombage for Pulmonary Tuberculosis

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We herein present the case of an 80-year-old man who had a history of pulmonary tuberculosis 60 years prior to this presentation. He had been treated with an artificial pneumothorax and the implantation of three Lucite balls in the right upper thorax. This is a representative case of collapse therapy for pulmonary tuberculosis, where space-
filling material had been placed to collapse the diseased lung tissue, a therapy that had been widely used in the era before effective anti-tuberculosis drugs became available. Interestingly, chest radiography and CT revealed an air-fluid level in the Lucite balls (Picture 1, 2). This patient died of progressive respiratory failure due to pneumonia without any complications from the Lucite-ball plombage. During autopsy, three Lucite balls, measuring 23 mm in diameter and covered by pleura, were observed in the right dorsal chest wall (Picture 3).

Faress et al. reported a case of air-fluid levels in Lucite balls in the chest without any signs or symptoms of an active infection (1). Similarly in the present case, clear fluid was identified in the Lucite balls; its cultivation yielded neither *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* nor any other pathogens (Picture 4).

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Reference