A Case of Impalement Injury in the Head and Neck

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Impalement injuries of the head and neck are extremely rare. We report herein on a 62-year-old man with an impalement injury in the head and neck region from the branch of a tree. He fell into a ditch and a tree branch penetrated through his left cheek to the posterior region of his neck. Contrast enhanced CT showed that it had penetrated through the parotid gland and passed near the retromandibular vein. The tree stick was successfully removed under general anesthesia without cervical incision. Although a salivary fistula occurred temporally after removal, no other sequela was observed. Preoperative contrast enhanced CT is useful to prevent complications in removal of foreign bodies in the parotid gland.

Keywords : impalement injury, parotid gland, tree stick

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Initial findings

Axial CT scan after enhancement clearly illustrates that the branch (*) passes outside the mandible (white arrow) and penetrates the parotid gland (★). The common carotid artery and the internal jugular vein (▲) have been pushed medial to the branch, and are not damaged.