Brain Disorders/Neurological

Cerebral and coronary air embolism: an intradepartmental suicide attempt. Full Recovery with Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

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Uncooperative but alert on arrival, a 21-year old suicidal man was found suddenly unconscious with agonal respirations 2 h into his Emergency Department evaluation. Initially admitted for ingesting multiple pills and self-inflicting a deep wrist laceration, the patient now had a Glasgow Coma Scale score of 3, a dense left-sided hemiplegia, and an electrocardiogram suggestive of acute myocardial infarction. This constellation of physical findings, together with an echocardiogram revealing bi-ventricular gas artifact, led to a diagnosis of coronary and cerebral air emboli.

The patient was urgently resuscitated and then underwent hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Subsequent examination confirmed a full recovery. This article details this unprecedented case, as well as clinically relevant aspects of air embolism.

PMID: 12865105 [PubMed - in process]

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