

Giant left atrium calcification

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A 73-year-old man, with a history of rheumatic mitral stenosis for 40 years, mitral valve replacement in 1991, and pacemaker implantation due to sick sinus syndrome in 2005, was admitted to our hospital presenting with dyspnea and peripheral pitting edema. The chest X-ray study

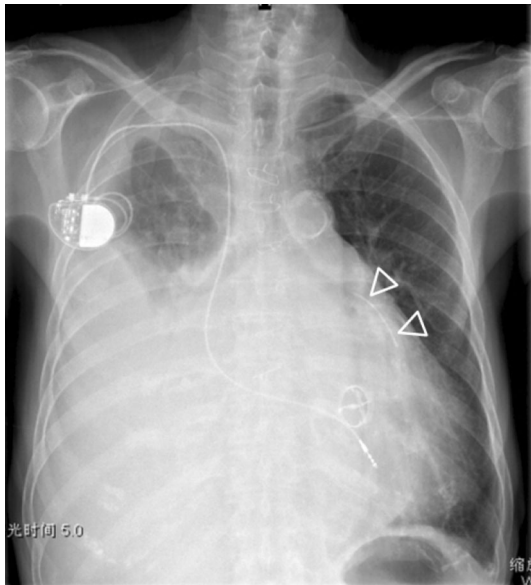


Fig. 1 The posteroanterior view of the chest X-ray study shows curvilinear cardiac calcification (arrows)



Fig. 2 A non-contrast CT scan of the chest better localizes these calcifications on axial images (arrows)

revealed an unusual pattern of curvilinear cardiac calcification (Fig. 1). Computed tomography showed a giant left atrium with calcification (Fig. 2).

Rheumatic heart disease, often neglected by media and policy makers, is a major burden in developing countries. There are about 2.5 million people with rheumatic heart disease in China [1]. The left atrium calcification is a rare complication of long-standing rheumatic valvular heart disease. It takes an average duration of 41 years to develop atrium calcification after rheumatic fever [2]. The left atrium calcification was first described in 1912 by Oppenheimer [3]. Porcelain left atrium is a rare entity; furthermore, massive calcification of left atrium has been reported in very few cases.

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Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Statement of human and animal rights All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the author.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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