A series of unfortunate events: Mind the windpipe

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September 22, 2020

Abstract

Tracheal stenosis can be a disastrous consequence of prolonged endotracheal intubation. In the COVID-19 era, vigilance must be maintained not to overlook this complication.

Case Description:

A 55-year- old gentleman presented with respiratory symptoms and was diagnosed with severe Covid-19 pneumonia and ARDS requiring oxygen support the ended up needing endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation for 13 days after which he was extubated. Unfortunately, he was re-intubated 9 days later after his respiratory status suddenly deteriorated needing mechanical ventilation for another 5 days. Around 4 weeks after discharge he presented with shortness of breath and stridor with chest CT scan showing critical narrowing at the level of second thoracic vertebra (Figures 1-3). Surgical treatment with tracheal stenosis resection and anastomosis was done under general anesthesia and ECMO. He was discharged home 8 days later in good general condition. Vigilance must be maintained not to miss this serious complication especially in the era of Covid-19 pandemic.

Key Clinical Message:

Since we started to encounter post-covid pneumonia patients in our clinics, tracheo-laryngeal stenosis should be kept in mind as one of the complications post-prolonged intubation (>7 days) particularly in those who are persistently symptomatic.

Consent for publication

This case report does not contain any personal identifier of the patient e.g. name, photograph, etc. It only includes radiological and pathological imaging.

A written patient informed consent of patient information, diagnostic images and publication was signed by the patient.

Availability of data and material:

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Acknowledgements:

We acknowledge the Qatar National Library for funding the open access publication of this article. We also acknowledge the Medical Research Center at Hamad Medical Corporation for their support.

Disclosure: The authors report no conflicts of interest in this work.

Authors contributions:

Dr. Anam M. Elarabi, Corresponding author, manuscript review and submission

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Dr. Mona Babikir, Manuscript review.

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed, Manuscript review.

Dr. Rashid Mazhar, Manuscript review.

Dr. Tasleem Raza, Manuscript review.

Figure 1: 3D reconstruction of CT-Chest showing the level and extent of the tracheal stenosis (Anterior view)

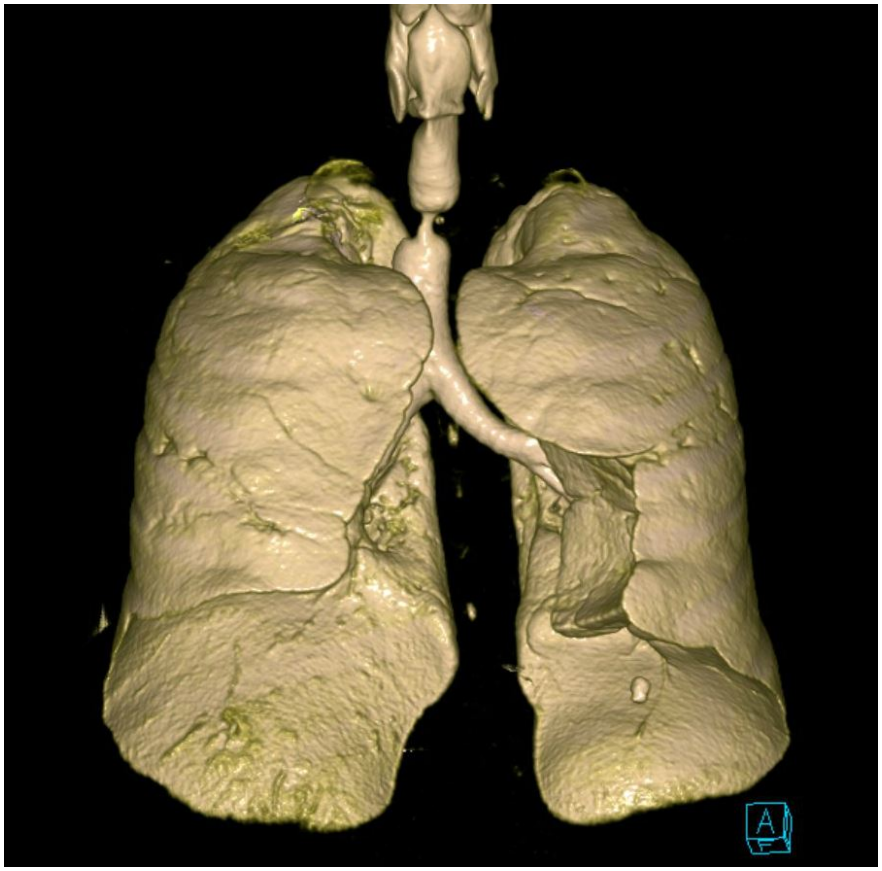

Figure 2: 3D reconstruction of CT-Chest showing the level and extent of the tracheal stenosis (Posterior view)

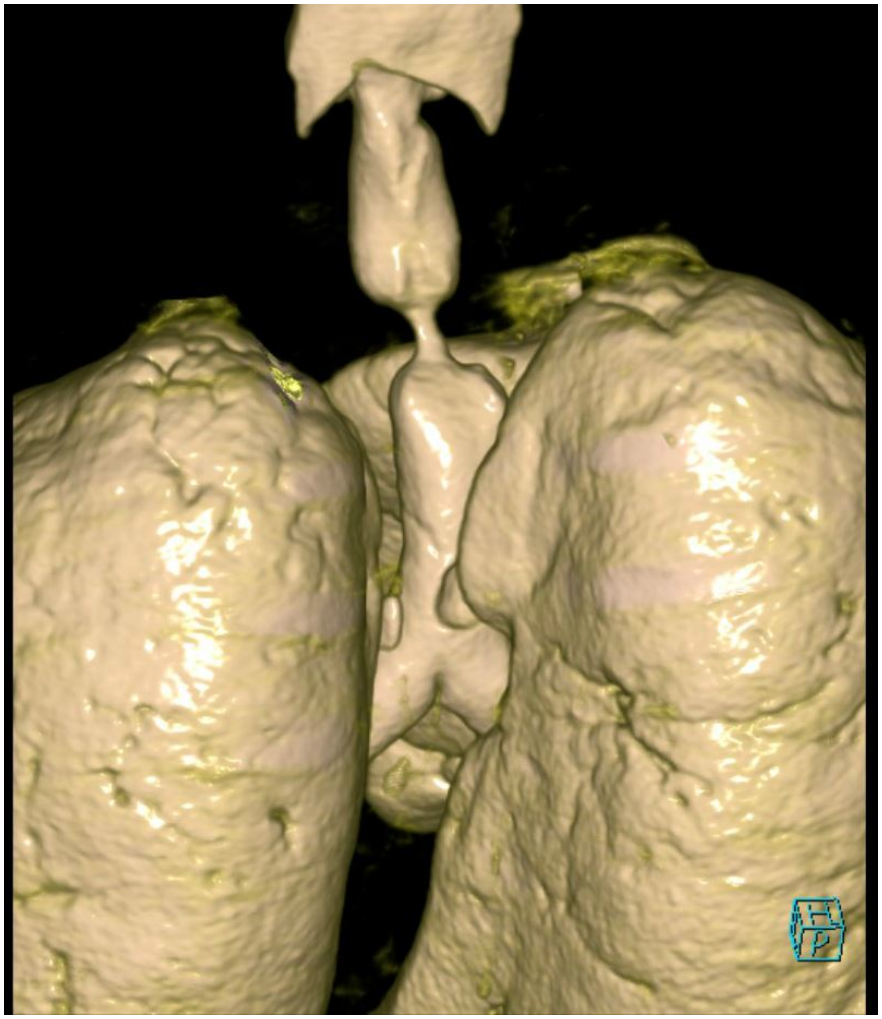

Figure 3: Saggital section of the CT-scan Chest showing the significant narrowing of the tracheal at the second thoracic vertebral level.