Medical Image of the Week: Esophageal-Pleural Fistula

Figure 1. Esophagram showing fistulous tract formation from the distal esophagus just proximal to the gastroesophageal junction, with possible communication with the pleural space.

Figure 2. CT scan of the chest showed empyema with LLL pneumonia and air in the mediastinum.
Figure 3. Three-dimensional CT scan of the chest showed fistulous tract close to the gastroesophageal junction.

A 51 year old woman with rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes mellitus and gastroesophageal reflux disease had a transoral incisionless fundoplication for a hiatal hernia 6 months before admission. She presented with left lower lobe pneumonia and empyema. The esophagram showed a fistulous tract communicating with the pleural space (Figure 1). CT scan of the chest also showed air in the mediastinum (Figure 2) as well a fistulous tract in the three dimensional reconstruction (Figure 3). Esophagastroduodenoscopy (EGD) showed an esophageal defect 5 cm above the gastroesophageal junction. An esophageal stent was placed with success.

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