

An Unusual Presentation of Self-Inflicted Multiple Sewing Needles in Forearms and Hands in an Adult Male—A Case Report.



Medical Science

KEYWORDS : Self-inflicted, sewing needle, personality disorder, migration, foreign body

*Pandey K.K

Assistant Professor, Department of Orthopedics, NSCB Medical College, Jabalpur.
*Corresponding author

Chandani O.P

Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, NSCB Medical College, Jabalpur.

ABSTRACT

Self-penetration of multiple sewing needles in an adult indicates some psychiatric illness that needs treatment to avoid serious health problem. We report a 20 years old male presented in outdoor clinic with self-inflicted multiple sewing needles in his forearms and hands. He was referred to the department of Psychiatry where he was diagnosed with an impulse control disorder along with peculiar personality trait. His psychiatric illness was improved with psychological and pharmacological treatment. Painful sewing needles were removed surgically with localization under C-Arm fluoroscopy. Local morbidity and risk of injury to vital organs due to future migration should be considered during removal of asymptomatic needles.

Introduction: Children are usually more prone to have foreign body ingestion or injury accidentally. But self-inflicted multiple sewing needles in older age group indicate psychiatric illness. Self-harm is reported in borderline personality disorder. Other causes of self harm are substance abuse disorder, eating disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, and several personality disorders. [1]

Case History: A 20 yr old, male presented at outdoor clinic, with complaint of multiple tiny scar marks over forearms and hands. Plain radiographs showed multiple sewing needles in forearms and hands. In clinical interaction with patient it is found that he harmed himself impulsively and felt pleasure by his act and there was a guilty after the act. His parents were not aware of the illness. Except his impulsive behaviour he had no other significant clinical history of other psychiatric illness. He was referred to the Department of Psychiatry where an impulse control disorder along with peculiar personality trait was identified in him and subsequently he was treated with Fluoxetine (started with 20 mg and gradually build up to 40 mg) and Risperidone 0.5 mg at night. In addition to pharmacotherapy, cognitive behaviour therapy was also given. In 6 weeks of time, he reported improvement in the form of reduced impulsive feelings. With psychiatric treatment, we are able to remove needles surgically with localization under C-Arm fluoroscopy. Retrieval of sewing needles present in the deep soft tissue was found difficult and it took long duration of surgery with wide exposure. Rust coloured needles were surrounded by thick reactive fibrous tissues.

Discussion: Usual foreign bodies include coin, bone piece, fish bone, nails, button, Glass pieces, denture, ear ring, chain, pins and needles. [2, 3.]

Foreign bodies can enter the body cavities not only through ingestion, but also through a penetrating injury. [4] The mode of ingestion of sewing needle in tonsil, stomach and liver were reported. [5, 6, 7] The mode of penetration of sewing needle in abdomen, stomach, myocardium, thoracic cavity, appendix and cervical spine were reported. [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]

In our case, patient inserted needles impulsively for pleasure and after insertion he had guilty of doing so.

Schechter and Gilbert reviewed 157 published reports of injuries in the heart and great vessels due to pins and needles and they found that most of the injuries occurred accidentally or by self-infliction due to an psychiatric disorder. [14] After sewing needle penetration patient may remain asymptomatic if no treatment was taken. In the literature migration of the needles

due to their sharp nature are reported with serious complications. [15,16,17]

In our case we removed all the sewing needles surgically with localization under C-Arm fluoroscopy.



Figure 1: Clinical Photograph of the forearms and hands of adult male showing multiple scar marks



Figure 2: Plain Photograph of Right forearm and hand showing multiple sewing needles.



Figure 3: Plain Photograph of Left forearm and hand showing multiple sewing needles.



Figure 4: rust colour sewing needles removed surgically.

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