

The chopstick: a rare and serious cause of penetrating oropharyngeal trauma in a 6-year-old

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A 6-year-old child suffered from a chopstick impalement in the oral cavity, with symptoms of pain, difficulty in swallowing and restricted mouth opening.

A foreign body was seen spanning the oropharyngeal and parapharyngeal spaces, and the carotid sheath on computed tomography (**Figure 1a**). Three-dimensional reconstruction of the head and neck vessels was performed for further examination, and computed tomography angiography showed compression of the internal carotid artery and internal jugular venous (**Figure 1b**). It could not be determined whether these vessels were ruptured or not.

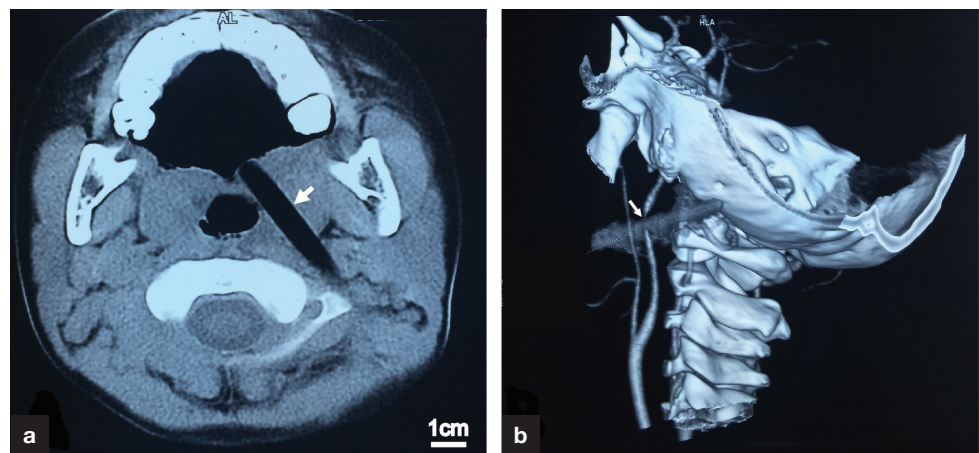


Figure 1. a. Axial computed tomography scan of a 6-year-old girl who sustained a chopstick skewer injury to the oropharynx (arrow). b. Computed tomography angiography showing internal carotid artery compression (arrow).

The routine use of computed tomography can be useful in excluding a metallic foreign body and accurately identifying the extent of injury. The gold standard test for carotid artery injury is computed tomography angiography (Petrus and Nelson, 1998), which has a high specificity and sensitivity for detecting carotid injuries (Brietzke and Jones, 2005; Zonfrillo et al, 2008).

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