

A rare cause of pulmonary oedema: buried under an avalanche

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A 21-year-old man had been skiing when he was buried under 1 metre of snow by an avalanche. He was extricated by officials after approximately 15 minutes, and was brought to the authors' hospital 35 minutes after he had been rescued. The patient was agitated and had respiratory distress. Pulmonary auscultation revealed bilateral inspiratory crackles. His oxygen saturation was 89% despite the addition of oxygen (at first 3 litres/min via nasal cannula). Chest computed tomography on admission demonstrated pulmonary oedema (**Figure 1**). Repeat plain radiography taken 2 days later showed dramatic improvement of the oedema.



Figure 1. Computed tomography of the thorax shows pulmonary oedema.

Pulmonary oedema after burial in an avalanche is very rare (Glisenti et al, 2016; Cohen et al, 2017). However, hypoxia is likely to induce pulmonary oedema.

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