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**Answer: Foreign body aspiration**

The chest radiography showed a slightly elevated left diaphragm, indicating loss of lung volume or left phrenic nerve palsy. Flexible bronchoscopy revealed partial obstruction of the left lower lobe with an intra bronchial lesion, suspected to be a mass or a foreign body (FB). A rigid bronchoscopy carried out under general anaesthesia removed a hard 'Chikku' (a local fruit) seed of 13mm in length (Panel).



was unsuccessful and required rigid bronchoscopy.

FB aspirations are more common in children than in adults. Up to the age of 15 years, both the main bronchi are equally angled from the carina, and FB aspiration can be to either side. In adults, with growth and development, both the main bronchi diverge in different angles. The right bronchus is more acute to the trachea making it more prone to aspirations of FBs. Onr case series, reported 42 FBs in the right endo-bronchial tree, 20 in the left, and one in the trachea. <sup>1</sup> In another study, out of 40 cases, 26 were located in the right endo-bronchial tree with the rest in the left. Thirty-three FBs were removed by flexible bronchoscopy, six cases needed rigid bronchoscopy for removal and one required surgery. <sup>2</sup> As in this patient, attempted removal with flexible bronchoscopy

Depending upon the position of the FB, asphyxia and death may be the consequence but it may also be unnoticed until symptoms arise. History of choking has been reported in only 52.5% of cases. <sup>2</sup> In this case, the patient could recall a choking episode when she consumed a 'Chikku' fruit. Most of FB aspirations in healthy individuals present as chronic cough. This can lead to a diagnostic dilemma. Delayed extraction of the FB can cause chronic debilitating symptoms and recurrent infections which can lead to pulmonary abscess or bronchiectasis.

Food is the most common aspirated object. Other commonly retrieved FBs include seeds, nuts, bone fragments, nails, small toys, coins, pins, medical instrument fragments, and dental appliances. <sup>3</sup>

**REFERENCES**

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