

Clinical-Medical Image

Interruption of VCI with Azygos Continuation

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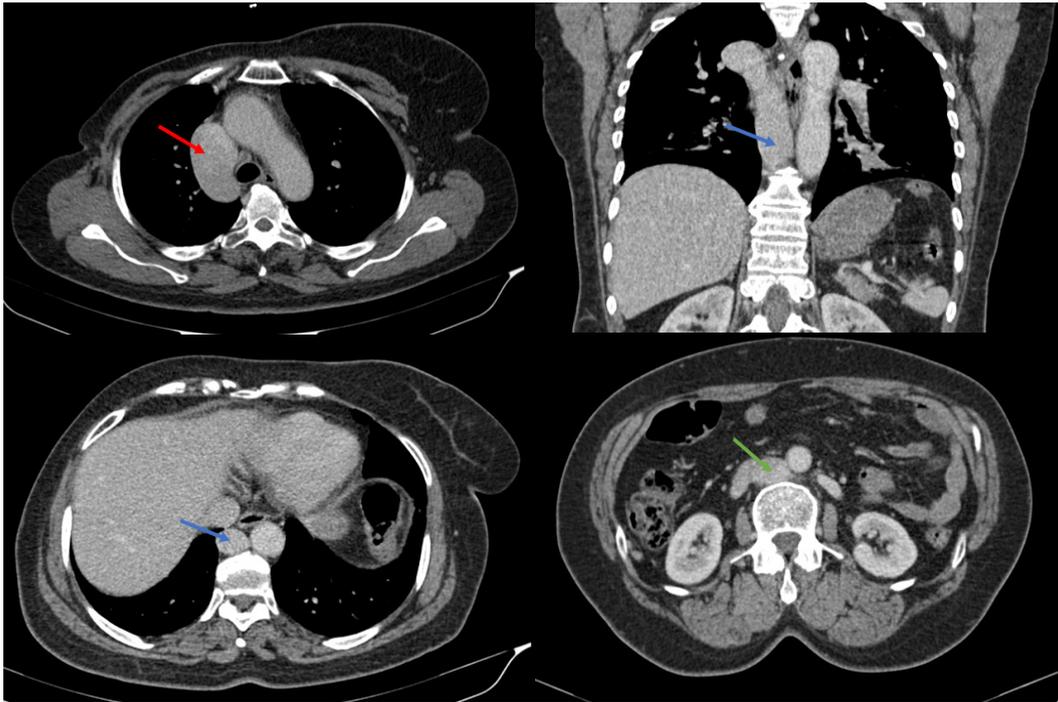


Figure 1: Thoracoabdominal CT scan in axial and sagittal sections: The inferior renal vena cava is interrupted and continues with the azygos vein (blue arrow) which drains downstream into the superior vena cava *via* the azygos arch which is dilated (red arrow). The suprahepatic veins drain directly into the right atrium and the IVC is normal (green arrow).

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A 40-year-old female patient, with no previous cardiovascular history, underwent a thoracic-abdominopelvic CT scan as part of the extension assessment of a ductal carcinoma *in situ* of the breast, incidentally showing an interruption of the IVC with azygos continuation (Figure 1).

Azygos continuation of the inferior vena cava is also known as absence of the hepatic segment of the IVC with azygos continuation. It is a rare vascular anomaly especially when not associated with congenital heart disease, asplenia or polysplenia syndromes. During embryonic life, the IVC is formed of 4 segments (hepatic, prerenal, renal and postrenal). The interruption of the IVC most likely results from a failure of fusion of the embryological yolk and subcardinal portions of the IVC. Therefore, azygos drainage occurs downstream into the superior vena cava *via* the enlarged azygos arch. The suprahepatic veins drain directly into the right atrium. This congenital anomaly does not have any specific presenting symptoms and its diagnosis is evoked on frontal chest radiography (dilatation of the azygos with outward displacement of the right paravertebral line) or on ultrasound (absence of visualization of the suprarenal vena cava). CT scan and contrast-enhanced phlebography may be helpful.

Recognition of this vascular anomaly preoperatively may be important in planning extracorporeal circulation and avoiding difficulties in cardiac catheterization [1-3].

Keywords: Continuation azygos; Veine cave inférieure; Tomodensitométrie

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Conflict of Interest

None of the authors has any conflicts of interests to disclose.

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