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COUP D'OEIL

Cementing the Vena Cava

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Percutaneous vertebroplasty is routinely being performed in patients with vertebral compression fractures using polymethylmethacrylate cement. The cement commonly leaks into the perivertebral tissues, but only around 1% of patients develop any clinical symptoms. The computed tomography image shows extrusion of cement into the vena cava (arrow) in a 24-year-old female treated for steroid-induced osteoporotic vertebral fracture. This was only discovered 1 week after the procedure when the patient complained of persistent backache, which prompted the imaging. She had no lower limb symptoms and in view of this, conservative management was pursued with anticoagulation therapy.

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