

[ PICTURES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE ]

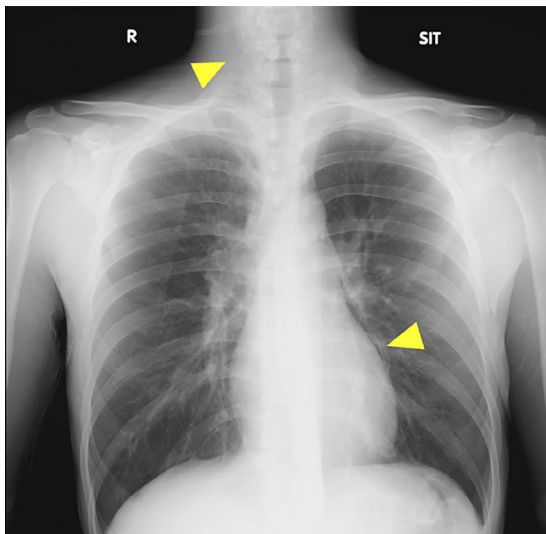
## Cervical Clue in Spontaneous Pneumomediastinum

Tsuyoshi Nojima, Takafumi Obara, Takashi Hongo and Atsunori Nakao

**Key words:** spontaneous pneumomediastinum, throat tightness, cervical imaging, chest radiography

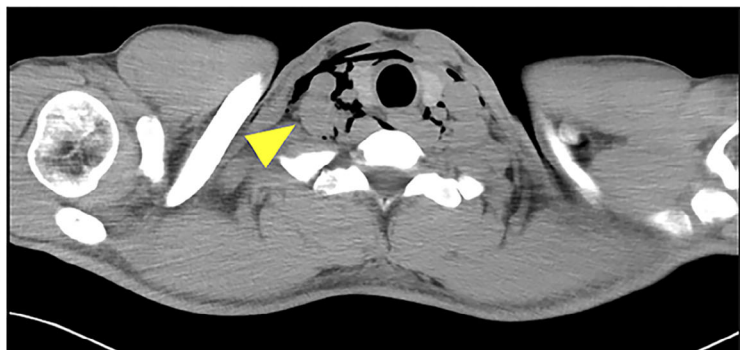
(Intern Med 65: 762-763, 2026)

(DOI: 10.2169/internalmedicine.5921-25)



**Picture 1.**

A previously healthy young man presented to the emergency department with a sore throat, cough, headache, and throat tightness. There were no clear triggers, such as exertion or forceful coughing. Although no palpable crepitus was present, chest radiography revealed subtle but distinct air tracking along the cervical soft tissues (Picture 1, yellow arrowheads), and computed tomography confirmed mediastinal emphysema (Picture 2, yellow arrowheads). He was stable with no history of trauma, procedures, or pulmonary disease. Conservative management led to the patient's recovery. This case highlights the diagnostic value of careful inspection of the cervical region on chest radiography. Without palpable crepitus, subtle cervical findings may only provide clues. While attention is typically focused on the lungs and mediastinum, cervical subcutaneous emphysema may be the earliest clue to mediastinal pathology (1, 2). In the present case, recognizing the cervical air shadow led to an



**Picture 2.**

Department of Emergency, Critical Care, and Disaster Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences Okayama University, Japan

Received: May 7, 2025; Accepted: June 4, 2025; Advance Publication by J-STAGE: July 24, 2025

Correspondence to Dr. Tsuyoshi Nojima, t.nojima1002@gmail.com

early diagnosis and prevented delay, even in a healthy young adult with nonspecific symptoms.

**The authors state that they have no Conflict of Interest (COI).**

## References

1. Meloy P, Bhambri A, Emeli IM. A case report of spontaneous pneumomediastinum from an unusual cause: baritone practice. *Cureus* **15**: e47289, 2023.
2. Bejvan SM, Godwin JD. Pneumomediastinum: old signs and new signs. *AJR Am J Roentgenol* **166**: 1041-1048, 1996.

The Internal Medicine is an Open Access journal distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view the details of this license, please visit (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Meloy P, Bhambri A, Emeli IM. A case report of spontaneous

---

© 2026 The Japanese Society of Internal Medicine  
*Intern Med* 65: 762-763, 2026