

Magnetic foreign body on the nasal septum

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Case report

A 9-year-old boy presented to our department 8 days after attempting to insert a non-piercing magnetic ear stud on either side of his nose. He had been unable to remove them, and both magnetic parts of the ear studs were still present in his nose. Examination of the nose was difficult, as he was unco-operative and his nose was filled with mucus and crusts. X-rays of the nose revealed the two ear studs on either side of the nasal septum (Fig. 1). The magnets had caused compression and thinning of the septal cartilage. Examination under general anaesthesia revealed the two magnets embedded into the mucosa across the septum. The magnets were removed under general anaesthesia by clamping and sliding them in opposite directions. The exposed compressed cartilage was gradually covered by granulation tissue and eventually nasal mucosa.

Discussion

Over the past few years it has become fashionable to place non-piercing magnetic ear studs in the nose. The ear studs consist of a decorative outer stud and a magnetic disk in the shape of a watch battery.¹ These magnets are made of neodymium and are considered to be one of the strongest magnets currently available.²

When one stud is inserted in the nose it does not usually cause a problem. However, if studs are inserted simultaneously in both nostrils there is a danger of the magnets dislodging from the outer studs and then adhering tightly across the nasal septum. The adhesive force of the magnets across the septum can cause necrosis of the septal mucosa and cartilage, with potential septal perforation and subsequent cosmetic deformity.^{2,3} Urgent removal of these magnets is mandatory and will usually require a general anaesthetic. The most effective way is to grip each magnet tightly with a forceps and try to slide them in opposite directions.

We feel that both health care workers and the general public should be aware of the problems that can potentially result from insertion of magnetic studs into the nose.

REFERENCES

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3. Lehman DA, Roy S. Septal perforation caused by nasal magnetic foreign bodies. *Ear, Nose and Throat Journal* 2005; 84(5): 266-267.



Fig. 1. Anteroposterior and lateral radiographs showing the position of the two magnetic foreign bodies on the nasal septum.