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PHOTO QUIZ

Why does the lung turn from black to white?

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A 66-year-old man presented to the emergency department with an eight day history of productive cough and malaise. Six days before presentation he tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. His medical history includes asthma and polyarthritis. The patient required 5 l/min of nasal oxygen to reach a peripheral oxygen saturation above 94%. The diagnosis of COVID-19 pneumonia was made. Thoracic computed tomography (CT) angiography revealed no signs of pulmonary embolism or bacterial super infection. Treatment with dexamethasone 6 mg iv daily was initiated. On day six of admission, the patient had a sudden increase in oxygen demand. The patient complained of chest pain on the left side while coughing. The physical examination revealed a respiratory rate of 35 breaths per minute and oxygen saturation of 86% while breathing 5 l/min of nasal oxygen. Lung auscultation revealed bilateral normal breath sounds. A pulse rate of 80 beats per minute and a normotensive blood pressure were found. The patient was transferred to the intensive care unit to provide high-flow nasal oxygen therapy. A chest X-ray was performed *(figure 1)*.

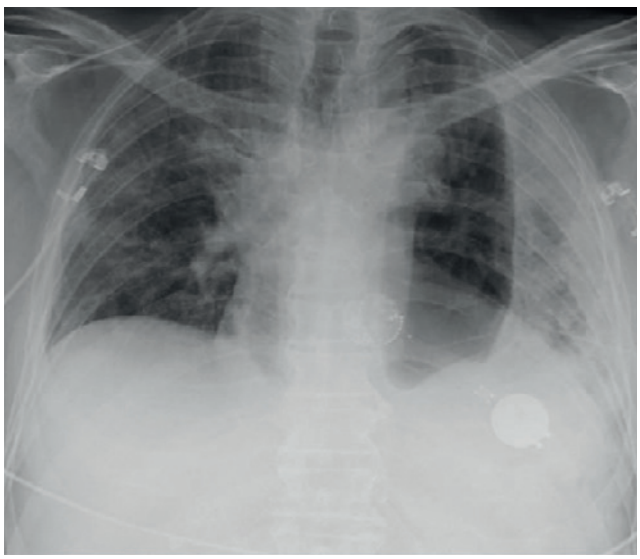

Figure 1. Chest X-ray (antero-posterior): a patient with COVID-19 experiencing a sudden increase of oxygen demand

What is your diagnosis?

ANSWER

You will find the answer on page 140 of this issue.