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COUP D’OEIL

Fatal Aortic Occlusion Due to Compression From Self Induced Acute Gastric Dilatation

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A 25 year old woman with bulimia presented with acute abdominal pain. She reported ingestion of 15 L water to present with sufficient weight to her psychiatrist. Subsequently, she developed severe ischaemia in both legs with missing femoral pulses. Computed tomography angiography showed extreme distension of a fluid filled stomach and occlusion of the abdominal aorta (arrow) and intestinal branches. Gastric fluid aspiration not only led to improved leg perfusion, but also to an acute drop of blood pressure. Acute exploratory laparotomy revealed multiple gastric perforations and ischaemia of the complete gastrointestinal tract. Increasing haemodynamic instability resulted in intra-operative death.

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