

Chilaiditi's Sign



Sinal de Chilaiditi

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Figure 1 - Chilaiditi's sign: Presence of a bowel loop in the hepato-diaphragmatic space; air trapped below the diaphragm on the right is located inside a colon segment, easily identified by colonic haustration.

A 74-year-old man with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease presented at the Emergency Department with hypertension. A chest X-ray was obtained, revealing a hepato-diaphragmatic interposition of an intestinal loop, known as Chilaiditi's sign (Fig. 1). The patient did not describe any gastrointestinal symptoms and the clinical examination only revealed mild hypertension.

Chilaiditi's sign was first described in 1910 by the Greek radiologist Demetrius Chilaiditi.¹ The temporary or permanent presence of colon or small bowel in the hepato-dia-

phragmatic space is generally incidental. When associated with symptoms, it is designated as a Chilaiditi's syndrome. These are generally related to the digestive system, and include dyspepsia, constipation, abdominal pain or intestinal obstruction secondary to a bowel volvulus.²

This entity requires no treatment in the absence of symptoms. The clinical relevance of the Chilaiditi's sign and syndrome relates to a differential diagnosis with a pneumoperitoneum, in which case an immediate surgical treatment is required.³

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