Pract. oto-rhino-laryng. 1965;27:320

Spontaneous Tonsillar Bleeding

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Spontaneous tonsillar bleeding, with its well-known causes (tonsillitis, peritonsillar abscess, blood [vessel] abnormalities) is discussed.

A case of a 25-year-old white female with spontaneous bleeding and unusual bleeding cause is reported.

Without any evidence or history of infection she had repeated spontaneous bleeding from the left tonsil.

External carotic arteriography showed no vessel-abnormality. However, subtraction-photography showed very clearly a conglomeration of vessels at the place of the left tonsil.

The left tonsil was removed without abnormal bleeding; the pathologist did not find anything abnormal with this tonsil.

In our opinion an arterio-venous shunt has probably been the cause which we could not find in the literature.

We recommend subtraction-photography (which removes the disturbing overlying bony skull structures) in every case of spontaneous tonsillar bleeding with unknown etiology.