SHORT REPORTS

PENETRATING CHEST TRAUMA

Fig 1. PA Chest Radiograph showing penetrating nail.

A 14-year-old boy was seen in the Casualty Department. He had tripped on a piece of string which was attached to a 6 inch nail. The nail had flown up and lodged in his back. On examination he showed no signs of respiratory distress. The nail was palpable with an entry site just below the inferior border of his left scapula, and positioned tangentially. A PA chest radiograph (Fig 1) appeared alarming until a tangential radiograph (Fig 2) confirmed only superficial involvement. The nail was removed under local anaesthetic, the wound probed, a tetanus toxoid booster and a broad spectrum penicillin

Fig 2. Tangential View showing only superficial involvement.

were administered intra-muscularly. A post removal radiograph showed no pneumothorax.

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