



## A thump and an expanding lump

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An 84-year-old woman was referred to the emergency department by her general practitioner following attempted aspiration of a forehead mass. She reported a 5-week history of an expanding mass on the left temporal region following a fall with minor head trauma. The mass was associated with left facial pain and numbness.

Her medical history included atrial fibrillation and she was on warfarin. On examination there was a 4cm by 2cm pulsatile mass (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Pulsatile mass on the left temporal region with fresh bleeding from the attempted aspiration site**



*What is the diagnosis?*

**Answer**—*Superficial temporal artery aneurysm*

**Comment**—Aneurysms of the superficial temporal artery (STA) are rare and they usually involve the anterior branch of the STA.<sup>1</sup> They are often associated with blunt or penetrating trauma giving rise to a pseudoaneurysm.

Patients, typically males, present 2–6 weeks after the initial injury with a slowly enlarging pulsatile mass. Less commonly, true aneurysms involving all three layers of the arterial wall have been reported to occur spontaneously. True spontaneous STA aneurysms have been associated with both congenital and atherosclerotic vascular changes.<sup>2</sup>

In this case, the STA was ligated and the pseudoaneurysm was excised. The patient made an uneventful recovery with a complete resolution of her symptoms.

This report highlights the dangers of aspirating an undiagnosed mass.

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