

▶ BACKGROUND

- **Catatonia** is a heterogeneous neuropsychiatric syndrome with distinct motor symptoms.
- It is typically associated with **primary thought** or **affective disorders**.¹
- Catatonia with **obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** is a less explored association.²

▶ CASE

- **18-year-old male** with a history of OCD and prior episode of catatonia who presented to the ED with **stupor, mutism, and withdrawal** in the context of medication non-adherence and **worsening OCD rituals**, including **episodes of breath-holding**.
- Bush-Francis Catatonia Rating Scale initially 18, improved to 7 with lorazepam challenge.
- Subsequently endorsed **chest pain**. CXR and Chest CT revealed **pneumomediastinum** believed to be secondary to breath-holding.
- After recovery of insight, patient was able to describe **obsessive worries that moving and breathing had encroached on other's space** and were **deserving of punishment**, resulting in purposeful mutism, breath-holding, and stuporous state.
- Condition gradually improved with restarting home psychotropics. Notably, he presented **several weeks later** with **paranoid delusions** and **hallucinations** consistent with psychosis.

Catatonic Syndromes may present diagnostic challenges due to the possibility of multiple underlying etiologies, & the poorly understood overlap in obsessive-compulsive & psychotic phenomena.

Historically: "**Obsessions**" were largely differentiated from "**Delusions**" by the presence of intact insight.⁴

Recently: Diagnostic guidelines have broadened,³ and **obsessive-compulsive and psychotic phenomena now overlap**, or potentially even lie on a continuum.



▶ DISCUSSION

- Only a handful of cases of OCD and catatonia have been described.
 - Like most prior reports, our patient was a young adult male with neurovegetative symptoms in the context of worsening OCD rituals.
 - This is the first known case to describe OCD with compulsive breath-holding. Breath-holding spells led to pneumomediastinum and occurred alongside other characteristic catatonic features.
 - This case **raises the question of whether there may have been an element of psychosis** underlying the breath-holding catatonic episode.
- Bidirectional association:
- 30% of patients with schizophrenia display obsessive-compulsive symptoms.
 - Those with OCD have an increased risk of subsequent schizophrenia diagnosis.⁴

▶ CONCLUSION

- Limited reports exist of **OCD** presenting with **catatonia**.
- We presented the first known case of **OCD with compulsive breath-holding**, in the context of **catatonia**.
- This case outlines how **catatonic syndromes** may present diagnostic challenges due to the **possibility of multiple underlying etiologies**, and the **poorly understood overlap in obsessive-compulsive and psychotic phenomena**.

▶ REFERENCES

1. Levenson JL. Medical aspects of catatonia. Prim Psychiatry. 2009 Mar 1;16(3):23-6.
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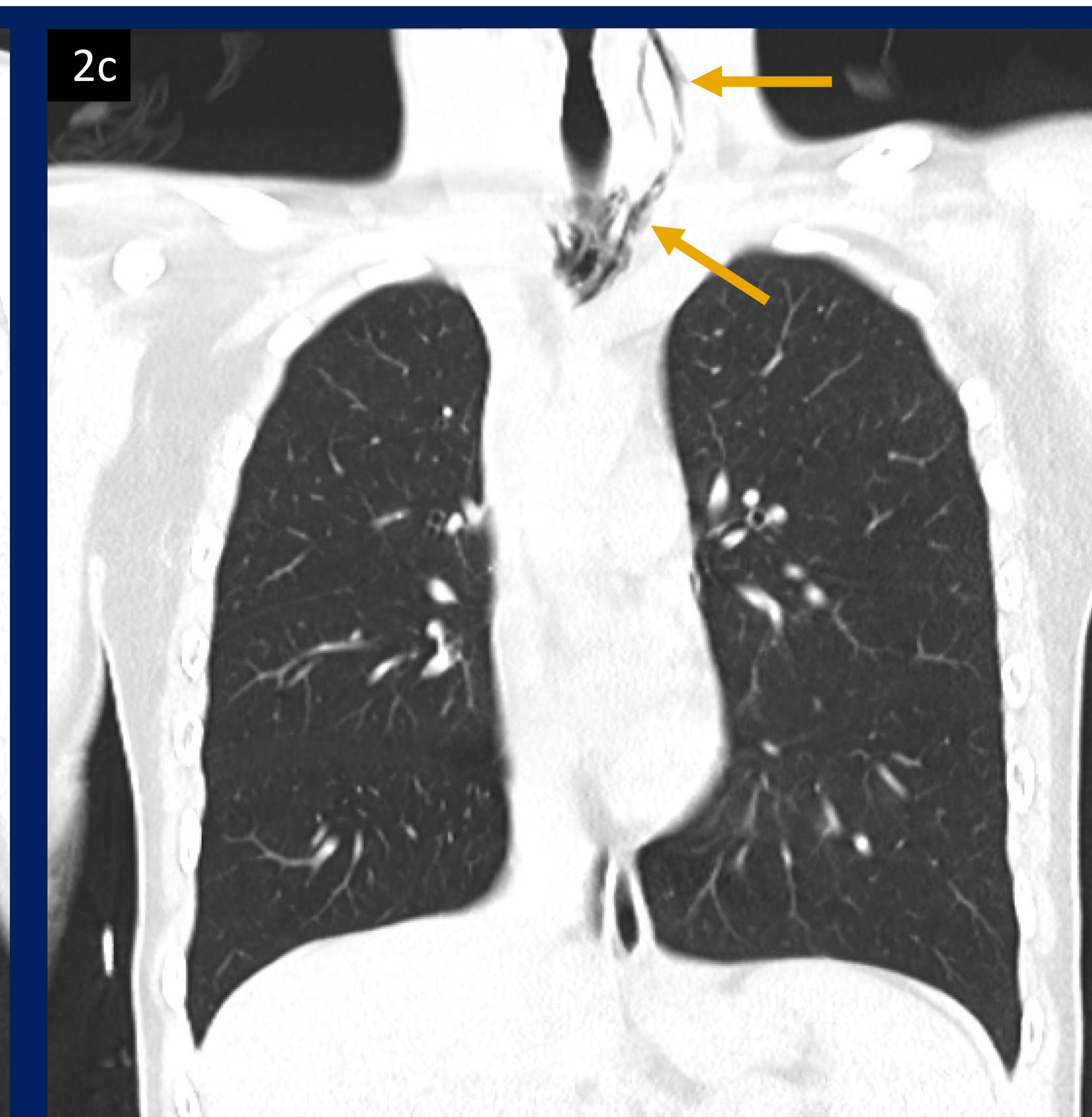
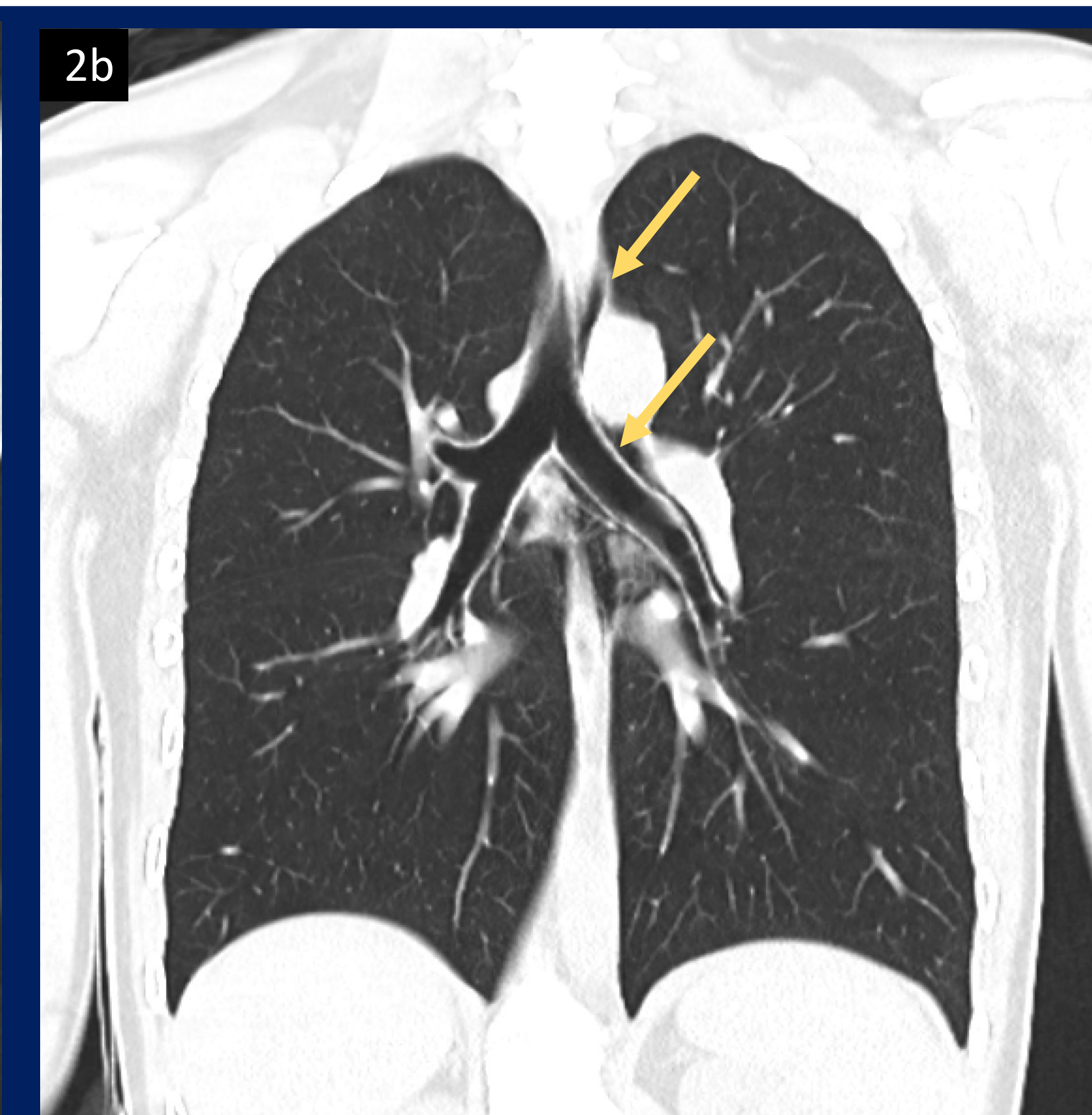
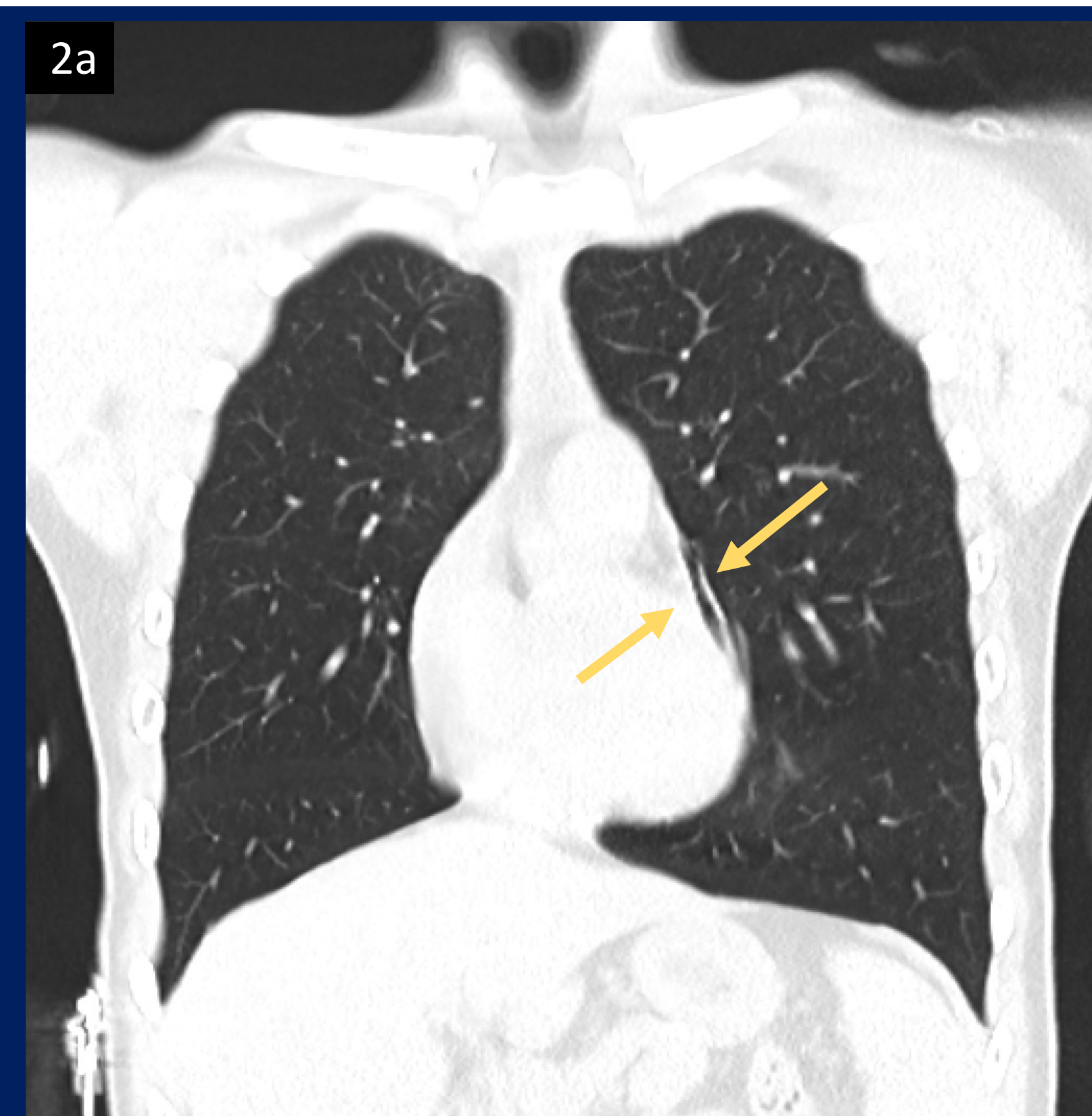
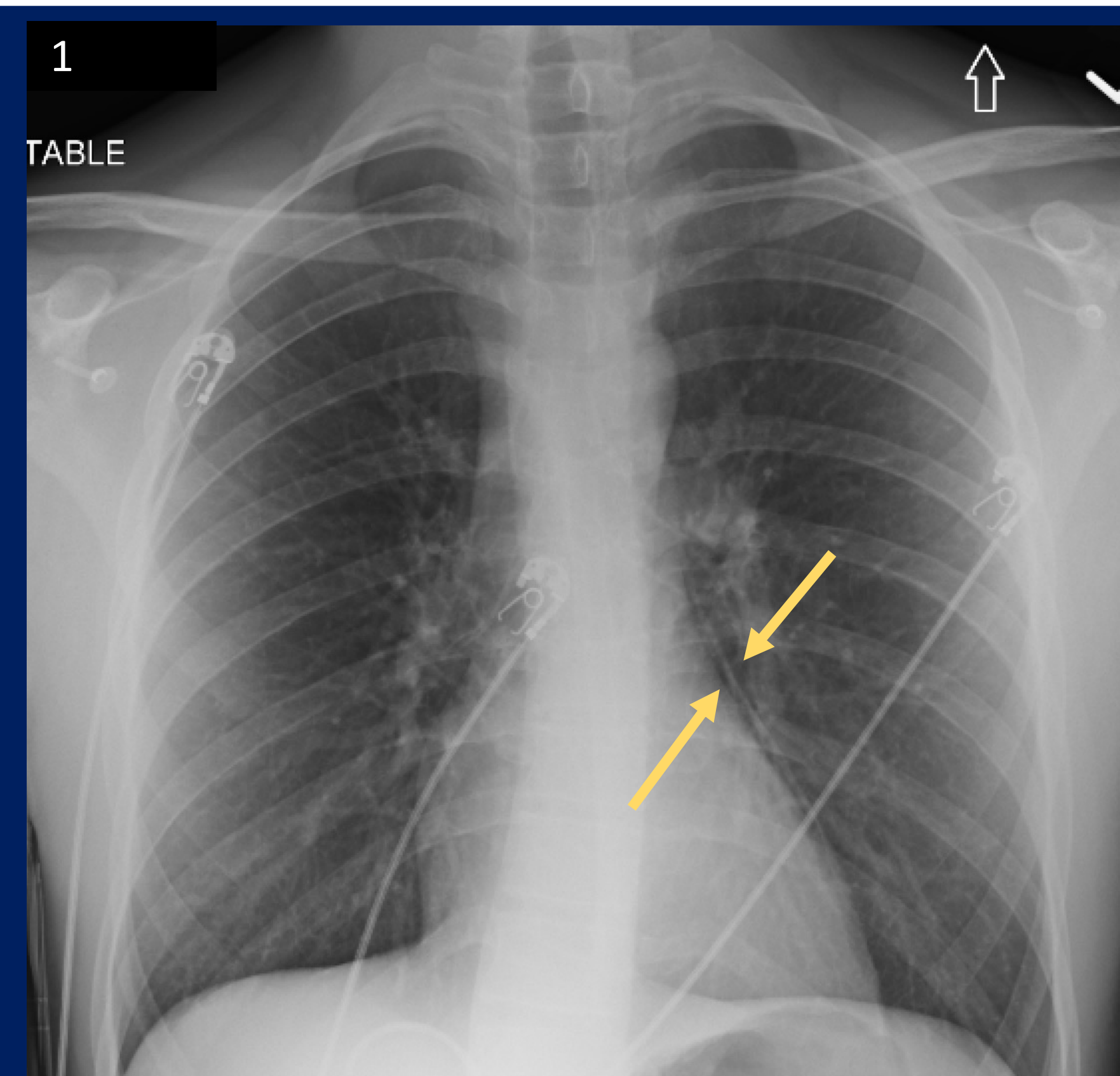


Figure 1: CXR, demonstrating lucency adjacent to the left heart border, consistent with pneumomediastinum. Thought to be due to repeated breath-holding.

Figure 2: CT Chest, demonstrating the extent of the pneumomediastinum.
2a: Air dissecting into left pericardial sac.
2b: Air outlining the tracheal and bronchial walls.
2c: Air extending into the lower neck.