We herein report a case of massive air entrainment from an inadvertently disconnected port of a central venous catheter (CVC) in the neck which culminated in an airlock of the ECMO circuit.”

Abstract:

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) has become an integral treatment option for patients as a bridge to transplant, management of post cardiotomy cardiogenic shock, and for rescue after cardiopulmonary arrest. Significant strides in ECMO technology and management cannot, however, replace the importance of maintaining and following a comprehensive safety checklist. We herein report a case of massive air entrainment from an inadvertently disconnected port of a central venous catheter (CVC) in the neck which culminated in an airlock of the ECMO circuit. Ascertaining the relative position of the tip of the CVC with respect to the venous cannula on chest X-ray, tightly securing all its ports, and appraising and educating the health-care team can prevent this rare but devastating complication of fatal air embolism.

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