

Letter to the Editor

Foreign material identification

Modern Pathology (2006) 19, 1519. doi:10.1038/modpathol.3800703

To the editor: The recent manuscript by Murakata *et al* studying acrylic polyamide plastic embolization materials nicely illustrates the struggle and histological maneuvers pathologists employ for identification of foreign material in tissue sections.¹ Interventional intravascular procedures are becoming more common and it is not unusual to find such material in routine surgicals and autopsies. Often, as the authors point out, little useful clinical history accompanies the patient or surgical specimen to help us.

I wish to bring attention to the readership an article that has proved invaluable for assessment of such material. Dr Walley and co-workers have published an atlas like article depicting the histology and special stain appearances of 130 foreign materials.² New devices and materials are introduced everyday, but many of these are still composed of prior materials. Nature and the environment also provide us with many inadvertent pick ups and foreign material introduction into our sections despite our care.

Most of us do not have easy access to infrared microspectroscopy or even scanning electron micro-

scopy. Judicious routine and special stains with reference to such an article may prove of use.

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References

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- 2 Walley VM, Stinson WA, Upton C, *et al*. Foreign materials found in the cardiovascular system after instrumentation or surgery (Including a guide to their light microscopic identification). *Cardiovasc Pathol* 1993;2:157–185.