Abstract

The authors present a case of a non-palpable contraceptive implant removal. Imagiology techniques as an upper arm radiograph can be used to locate non-palpable implants, which can be either migrated, damaged or both. Broken implants are an unusual occurrence but, as shown through our case, this complication may not be associated with an impairment of the contraceptive efficacy.

Keywords: contraception; hormonal contraception; contraceptive agents.

A 37-year-old caucasian woman, G3P2A1, attended our medical center for contraceptive implant removal. The etonogestrel-releasing implant had been inserted into the nondominant arm 40 months earlier, after removal of a previous one using standard technique. Patient referred good tolerance, lighter and infrequent

FIGURE 1. Radiograph of the upper nondominant extremity demonstrating two fragments with total length of approximately 4 centimeters near the sulcus between biceps and triceps muscle sheaths (a paper clip was used externally to mark the following incisional area).
menstrual periods and effective contraception. During examination, the rod was not palpable so a two-dimensional x-ray was performed to locate the implant (Figure 1). Two separated parallel fragments were identified with total length of approximately 4 centimeters. Under sterile conditions and local anesthesia, we have successfully removed the fragments through one longitudinal incision of 10 mm. The two pieces were revealed corresponding to one complete implant (Figure 2). Patient denied history of arm trauma or injury. Broken contraceptive implants are a rare phenomenon, especially in absence of trauma\textsuperscript{1-3}. In this patient, as in previous rare related cases, implant contraceptive efficacy was not affected even though the reported complication\textsuperscript{2}.

FIGURE 2. Photograph of the broken implant after removal.