A 79-year-old woman with paroxysmal atrial fibrillation and severe mitral regurgitation underwent a mitral valve plasty and suture ligation of the left atrial appendage. Because of the patient’s refractoriness to antiarrhythmic drugs, a transcutaneous pulmonary vein isolation was scheduled 17 months after the initial surgery. During the selective angiography (Figure 1) of the right superior pulmonary vein a saccular structure was surprisingly visualized, anteriorly and superiorly located to the mitral ring, corresponding to the previously presumed excluded left atrial appendage. A computed tomography scan, performed 2 days before ablation, also revealed that the left atrial appendage was not excluded (Figure 2). An incomplete exclusion of the left atrial appendage could correspond to a proembolic status, and can be documented by transesophageal echocardiography. Fortunately, oral anticoagulation has never been interrupted in our patient, and no thromboembolic complications have occurred. Different epicardial, endocardial, and combined epicardial-endocardial methods are currently being clinically investigated to close the left atrial appendage to ensure a true closure or excision of the left atrial appendage.

Disclosures
None.

Figure 1. Incomplete occlusion of the left atrial appendage after suture ligation. * indicates the right superior pulmonary vein; **, saccular structure; and ***, mitral ring.

Figure 2. Frontal view showing that the left atrial appendage (LAA) was not excluded after ligation. ** indicates LAA.
Decapitate or Strangulate?
Philippe Debruyne and Tom Rossenbacker

Circulation. 2011;123:2748
doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.016618
Circulation is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
Copyright © 2011 American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved.
Print ISSN: 0009-7322. Online ISSN: 1524-4539

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the
World Wide Web at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/123/23/2748

Permissions: Requests for permissions to reproduce figures, tables, or portions of articles originally published in Circulation can be obtained via RightsLink, a service of the Copyright Clearance Center, not the Editorial Office. Once the online version of the published article for which permission is being requested is located, click Request Permissions in the middle column of the Web page under Services. Further information about this process is available in the Permissions and Rights Question and Answer document.

Reprints: Information about reprints can be found online at:
http://www.lww.com/reprints

Subscriptions: Information about subscribing to Circulation is online at:
http://circ.ahajournals.org/subscriptions/