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**Answer: Cholecystectomy clips, Spinal prosthesis: Pedicle screws and rods on T12 and L2, Charm needles (*susuk*): >20 needles** (*Supplementary text for magnified image from journal website*).

Charm needles or more commonly known as '*susuk*' in the Malay language are seen as these multiple fine small needles as shown on the above radiography. Charm needles are usually found as incidental findings on radiographs and can be easily missed.<sup>1, 3, 4</sup> A study has shown that charm needles have no ferromagnetic characteristics and thus are safe for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).<sup>3</sup>

Charm needles are commonly inserted within the soft tissues of the forehead, cheeks, lips, mandible of the face, and to a lesser extent on the chest, abdomen, breasts, the limbs, mons pubis and spinal area.<sup>1, 3, 4</sup> Charm needles are usually made up of fine elements of gold, silver and copper alloy and are usually worn in the body as talismans.<sup>1, 2</sup> The size of the needles ranges between 0.5 to one mm in diameter and five to 10 mm in length.<sup>3</sup> The needles are usually inserted in the subcutaneous tissue by a 'bomoh' or spiritual medicine practitioner, believed to have mystic power of reciting incantations to

prevent oneself from spiritual harm and the skills to make traditional herbal medicines to cure psychological and physical illnesses as an alternative to receiving treatment from qualified medical doctors.<sup>1, 3</sup>

Charm needles are mostly worn by those of Malay ethnicity in Southeast Asia as it is a traditional beliefs that these needles have the power to enhance and preserve the wearer's physical beauty, health, youth, wealth, marital bliss and also provide protection against spiritual harm.<sup>1, 3, 4</sup> The cultural practice of *susuk* is usually kept in secrecy by the wearers.<sup>1, 3</sup> The number of needles inserted may vary in quantity (from one to 80) with the superstitious belief that the more needles worn impart greater efficacy of the charms.<sup>3</sup> Charm needles can remain in situ for many years and in our patient, the needles had been inserted for more than 20 years and fortunately had not experienced any complications.<sup>1, 3</sup> In a minority of cases, the needles may corrode and disintegrate into smaller fragments due to muscle contractions.<sup>2</sup> Charm needles are not visible externally and published reports have shown that *susuk* do not cause adverse effects such as pain and swelling.<sup>1, 3</sup>

## REFERENCES

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- 4: Shanmuhasuntharam P, Ghani SH. Susuks: charm needles in facial soft tissues. *Br Dent J* 1991; 170:309-11.