

# Embedded Pierced Earrings: A Case Report

## Gömülü Küpe: Bir Olgu Sunumu

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### ABSTRACT

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Complications caused by ear piercing are often treated in clinical practice, because body modification that involves piercing has become a commercial mass phenomenon. The ear is the most frequently pierced for adornment with jewelry. Ear piercing among children seems to increase and is being performed in younger children. Several complications are associated with pierced ears: local infection, bifid earlobe, allergy, keloid or cyst formation, sarcoid granuloma, hematoma, embedding, and inhalation of the earring. There are a few reports of embedded earrings independent of the effect of piercing. In this report, we describe a patient with embedded earring pins.

#### Keywords

*Body piercing; ear auricle; complications*

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### ÖZET

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“Piercing”i de kapsayan vücut süslemenin yaygın bir ticari hal alması sebebiyle kulak delme işleminden kaynaklanan komplikasyonlar klinik uygulamada sık olarak tedavi edilmektedir. Kulaklar en sık olarak mücevherat ile süsleme amacıyla delinir. Çocuklarda kulak delme arttığı görülmektedir ve küçük çocuklarda yapılagelmektedir. Birtakım komplikasyonlar delinen kulaklar ile ilişkilidir: Lokal enfeksiyon, bifid kulak memesi, allerji, keloid veya kist formasyonu, sarkoid granülom, hematoma, gömülü kalma ve küpenin inhale edilmesi. Delme işlemi etkisinden bağımsız olan gömülü küpe az sayıda rapor edilmiştir. Bu bildiride, gömülü küpe iğnesi olan bir hastayı sunduk.

#### Anahtar Sözcükler

*Vücut delme; kulak; komplikasyon*

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## INTRODUCTION

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Embedded pierced earrings have become a frequent complaint treated in clinical practice, because body modification that involves piercing has become a commercial mass phenomenon. As the number of body art devotees has increased, so has the number of reports in the literature that describe the complications of piercing. In earlobe piercing, medical complications (infection, bifid earlobe, allergy, keloid or cyst formation, sarcoid granuloma, hematoma, embedding, inhalation) are common.<sup>1-8</sup> In this report, we describe a patient with embedded earring pins.

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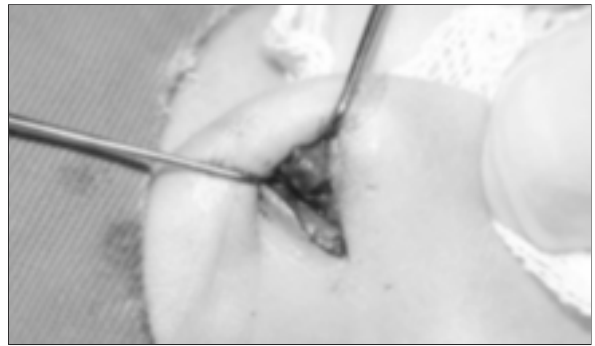
## CASE REPORT

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A 14-year-old girl was admitted with discoloration of and a painless mass in both earlobes. She said that her ears had been pierced when she was a young child, and she had been wearing pierced earrings since early childhood. She described painless swelling in each earlobe since three years. Additionally, in the previous one year she had noticed green-blue discoloration on the posterior surfaces of the both earlobes. During examination, a pin-shaped mass in each earlobe was noted on palpation, as was a green-blue oval macule (0.5 cm in diameter) behind each earlobe (Figure 1). Those areas were explored via a small posterior incision after the patient had received a local anesthetic, and the remnant of an earring was removed from each ear (Figure 2). Each excised earring pin was 3x2x2 mm in size (Figure 3). The incisions were closed with an absorbable suture. Local treatment and a systemic antibiotic medication were given to the patient for seven days after the inci-



**Figure 1.** A pin-shaped mass and a green-blue oval macule behind left earlobe.



**Figure 2.** Small posterior incision and removal of an earring remnant from left earlobe.



**Figure 3.** Each excised earring pin.

sions had been closed. On follow-up examination, she was free of symptoms.

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## DISCUSSION

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The ancient art of body piercing has been recently revived as a contemporary fashion statement. The ear is the most frequently pierced for adornment with jewelry; up to 80% or 90% of women have at least one pierced ear in the world. Piercing of the earlobe is a common and accepted practice worldwide; however, the piercing of other sites (the eyebrow, lip, tongue, nipple, nose, navel, or genitals) for adornment with rings, spheres, or chains has been gaining in popularity. Ear piercing among children seems to increase and is being performed in younger children.<sup>1,4,9,10</sup> However, the use of earrings as adornment can cause many medical problems. Piercing can lead to complications ranging from transient to serious disorders. In particular, ear piercing is associated with complications such as local infection, sepsis, keloid or cyst formation, sarcoid granuloma, hematoma, bifid earlobe, embedding, and inhalation. Earring-related complications are caused primarily by piercing; in one study, up to 35% of people with pierced ears had experienced one or more complications, such as minor infection (77%), allergic reaction (43%), keloid formation (2.5%), or tear-

ing of the earlobe (2.5%).<sup>9</sup> There are a few reports of embedded earrings independent of the effect of piercing.<sup>1,4,8,9,11-15</sup> That complication usually resulted from the improper use of ear-piercing implements (a needle, a safety pin, a sharpened stud, self-piercing kits, or a spring-loaded gun). The use of a spring-loaded gun in particular has been reported to result in an increased frequency of a complication in which the earring training stud becomes embedded in the earlobe several weeks after ear piercing.<sup>1,2,4,8,9,11,13-15</sup>

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## CONCLUSION

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We suggest that wearing pierced earrings while sleeping might cause this problem, and we recommend that either pierced earrings without pins be worn or that pierced earrings with pins be removed overnight, especially in young children.

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