

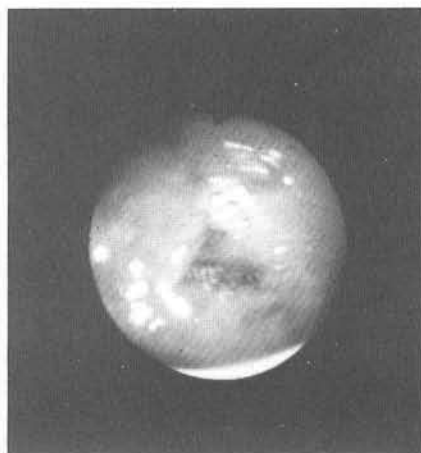


Fig. 1

The Bee: an Unusual Gastric Foreign Body

SIR, — Over the last few years the literature has provided us with descriptions of the most curious and sometimes fantastic and bizarre foreign bodies, introduced voluntarily or involuntarily into the upper digestive tract. We hope to be added to this long list by reporting a somewhat singular case which could have had serious consequences. An 18-year-old girl, riding a motorcycle, evidently with her mouth open, felt the impact of a foreign body against her palate; she first experienced an intense burning sensation and a pain in her throat and then dysphagia. Examination of the oral cavity showed nothing unusual. The endoscopic examination performed with direct-vision introduction of the fiberscope showed a slightly swollen, bloated area of no specific aspect in the retropharynx. The esophagus was normal while in the gastric fundus a bee was clearly identifiable, permitting us to reconstruct what had happened. Further examination of the retropharynx excluded the presence of a sting. Possible complications which could have occurred were either anaphylactic shock, not dependent however on the location of the sting, or an asphyxial crisis if the allergic reaction had been more pronounced and above all, if it had occurred in the glottis. Fortunately, neither of these complications occurred and after some hours of observation, the patient was discharged, everyone happy at the danger narrowly avoided, with the advice in future to ride her motorcycle with mouth closed.

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