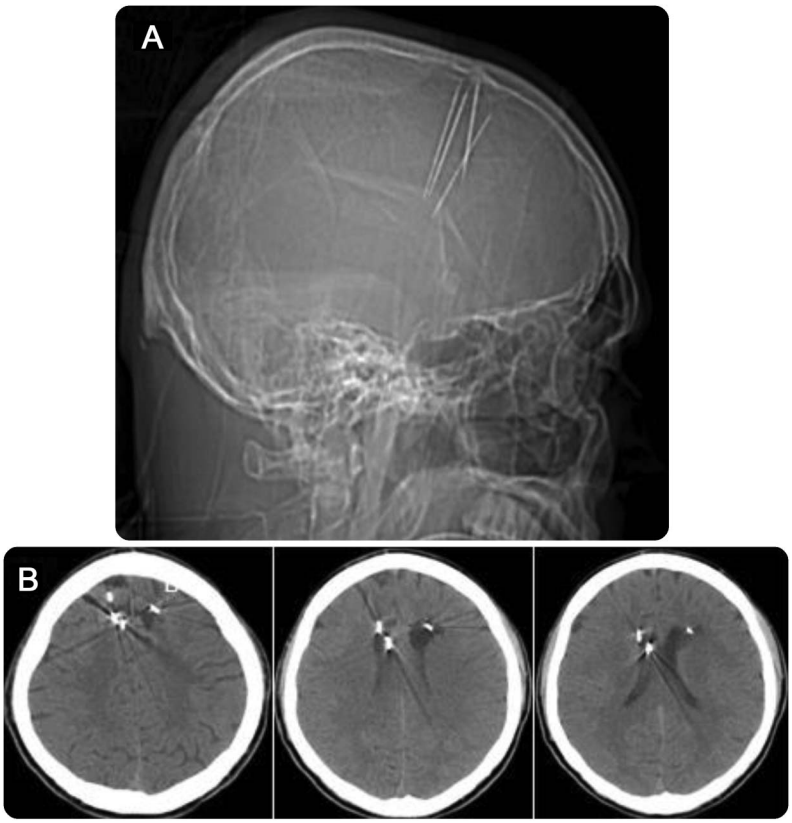
Traditional treatment of epilepsy

Trepanation revisited

Figure Destructive form of traditional epilepsy therapy



(A) Scout image of CT scan shows multiple metallic needles projecting from region of coronal suture into brain. (B) Axial brain images at brain window setting show needles in frontal lobes with surrounding low density indicating gliosis.

A 29-year-old South Asian man, with epilepsy since childhood, presented to the emergency room with a seizure. CT scan (figure) showed multiple metallic needles projecting from the coronal suture into the brain. In order to expel the demon that a traditional healer believed was haunting the patient, the skull and brain were pierced with needles. It is unclear whether the demon was successfully expelled, but the seizures persisted and could have been worsened by this treatment. Measures are warranted to warn the public against dangerous modes of traditional medicine.[1,2]

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