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CARDIOVASCULAR FLASHLIGHT

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Watch out for the WATCHMAN

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A 55-year-old man underwent percutaneous left atrial appendage (LAA) occlusion for recurrent bleeding during anticoagulation for atrial fibrillation. He had a history of myocardial infarction, ischaemic cardiomyopathy, hypertension, and end-stage renal disease with haemodialysis. Despite successful WATCHMAN implantation (Panel A), we noted a discrepancy between transoesophageal echocardiogram (no peri-device leak, Panel B) and CT scan (contrast filling in LAA, Panel C) during post-procedural follow-up at 8 weeks. In accordance with previous studies, we switched the anticoagulation therapy to the antiplatelet agent. At 22 months after LAA occlusion, the patient underwent heart transplantation due to progression of ischemic cardiomyopathy. During follow-up thereafter, the patient was free from bleeding and there was no cardioembolic event. Upon examining the explanted heart, we discovered that nearly half of the device was not covered by endocardium (Panel D), thereby demonstrating incomplete endocardial healing, even at 22 months after successful LAA occlusion.

