A 25-year-old female was referred to our unit with chronic solid-food dysphagia and retrosternal pain. According to the patient, all symptoms had persisted with fluctuating intensity since she was 6 years old. Regardless of several examinations (e.g. esophageal fluoroscopy, patient was refusing esophagoscopy) undertaken throughout this period, a history of other diseases was negative. After admission to our unit, endoscopic evaluation of the esophagus revealed a relatively tough stricture located below the pharyngoesophageal junction surrounded by inflammatory infiltration. Additionally, a foreign body impacted in the esophageal wall at the same level was visualized. Subsequently, the object was safely extracted with a flexible endoscope while the patient was under general anesthesia (Fig. 1 and 2). The impacted foreign body appeared to be a 2 cm, round, plastic toy that was popular in Poland in the 1980s, which the patient claims to have swallowed at the age of 4 years (Fig. 3). As a result she suffered from continuous vomiting for a few days, yet was free from further symptoms until she was 6 years old, when dysphagia and retrosternal pain occurred for the first time. Because the extracted foreign body was impacted deeply inside the esophageal wall, only a minor part was visible yet no secondary injuries or complications were encountered. After the procedure, postoperative care included a 5-day hospital stay with total parenteral nutrition and oral intake withheld. Afterwards, a rapid resolution of all symptoms was observed. The subsequent 12-month follow-up period was uneventful.

In general, a foreign body impacted in the esophagus may result in several potential complications (e.g. perforation, hemothorax, fistula, hemorrhage, diverticulum) [1–3]. Thus, this is one of a few cases reported in the literature involving both prolonged presence of a foreign body in the esophagus and absence of any major complications.

References