A 65-year-old woman experienced an acute onset of expressive dysphasia 48 hours after a left carotid endarterectomy. A computed tomographic (CT) head scan revealed a 35-cm³ left frontal hematoma (Figure A). The patient improved with conservative management. A CT scan performed 9 weeks later demonstrated hypodensity with ring enhancement postcontrast (Figure, B and C). Subsequent magnetic resonance imaging findings of negative mass effect and uniform hemosiderin staining weighed against an associated tumor or abscess (Figure, D).

Contrast enhancement in a ring pattern may appear within 1 week and persist for 6 months after a hemorrhagic stroke, mimicking the appearance of a tumor or an abscess. Magnetic resonance imaging noninvasively provides evidence against these alternative diagnoses.

Accepted for Publication: February 25, 2004.
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Author Contributions: Study concept and design: Wong and Henderson. Acquisition of data: Wong and Rajah. Analysis and interpretation of data: O’Sullivan. Drafting of the manuscript: Wong, Henderson, and Read. Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: O’Sullivan, Read, and Rajah. Administrative, technical, and material support: Rajah and Read. Study supervision: Read.

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Figure. A, Initial computed tomographic scan demonstrating left frontal hematoma. Precontrast (B) and postcontrast computed tomographic scan (C) 9 weeks later showing a ring-enhancing lesion. D, T2 magnetic resonance image demonstrating negative mass effect.