

North Korea

'Scar' Suggests Kim Jong-un Had Medical Treatment

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North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's reappearance on May 1 to open a fertilizer plant in Sunchon north of Pyongyang quelled premature rumors of his demise, but a brown spot on his wrist keeps the rumor mill in overdrive.

The brown spot measuring around 0.5 cm can be spotted on Kim's right wrist in state TV footage. It is round and clear, suggesting it was not caused by an accident.

The spot was not visible when Kim was attending a Workers Party meeting on April 11. Some cardiovascular experts surmise that it was made by a thick needle penetrating skin and may be the result of a coronary angiography.



This combination photo shows a spot on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's wrist (circled) as he waves during the ribbon-cutting at a fertilizer plant in Sunchon, South Pyongan Province on May 1, in this grab from [North] Korean Central Television the following day. In the April 11 picture (right) the spot is not visible.

Kim Moo-hyun at the Korean Society of Interventional Cardiology said, "Based on the shape and location, there is an 80-percent chance that it was caused by an angiogram."

Kim was also slightly dragging his left foot at certain times during the ceremony, and his wrist and face appeared swollen. But doctors admit an accurate diagnosis based on such signs alone is impossible.

A senior Cheong Wa Dae official said Sunday, "There are news reports that [Kim] had surgery based on observations that he walked differently, but we believe such reports are inaccurate."

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump said he is "glad" Kim is back. "I, for one, am glad to see he is back, and well!" Trump tweeted.

The New York Times said Saturday the rumors just show "how little the world knows about what's happening" in the reclusive country and "how vulnerable it is to misinformation."