IMAGE IN CARDIOLOGY

Cardiogenic shock due to sexually transmitted disease – A rare cause of acute myocardial infarction

Choque cardiogénico devido a doença sexualmente transmissível – uma causa rara de enfarte agudo do miocárdio

Marisa Passos Silva*, Marta Ponte, Eulália Pereira, Daniel Caeiro, Lino Santos, Vasco Ribeiro

Cardiology Department, Vila Nova de Gaia/Espinho Hospital Center, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

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A 55-year-old male patient, who was a smoker and chronic alcoholic, was admitted to the emergency department with epigastric pain and vomiting which had lasted 14 hours. He had signs of cardiogenic shock. Electrocardiogram showed atrial fibrillation with slow ventricular response and ST-segment elevation in leads II, III, aVF, V1 and V2 (A). A cardiac angiography was performed immediately showing a normal left coronary artery (B and C); the right coronary artery (RCA) could not be catheterized. A CT angiography was performed and showed aortic root (AR) and ascending aorta (AA) dilation with diffuse circumferential wall thickening occluding the ostium of the RCA (D, E and F). The wall thickening also extended to the descending aorta (D and G). On the transesophageal echocardiography, the circumferential thickening of the thoracic aorta had a coarse irregular luminal surface (H). The right ventricle was dilated and with severely depressed systolic function (I) (Figure 1).

The patient tested positive for syphilis serology, with elevated titers of Treponema pallidum hemagglutination assay (TPHA) and venereal disease research laboratory (VDRL). The remaining microbiological, serological and immunological tests were negative. Diagnosis of syphilitic aortitis with involvement of the RCA ostium was then made.

Surgical intervention was ruled out and, despite supportive measures, the patient died 72 hours after admission.

Dilatation of the AR and the AA, aortic thickness involving a coronary ostium and elevated VDRL and TPHA titers...

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: marisa.passos.silva@gmail.com
(M. Passos Silva).

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are highly suggestive of syphilitic aortitis. Syphilis is an etiology that, although rare, should be taken into account in the diagnosis of patients with acute myocardial infarction and coronary ostial stenosis.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.