IMAGE IN CARDIOLOGY

Massive calcification involving a left ventricular false
tendon

Calcificação cardíaca envolvendo um falso tendão ventricular esquerdo

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Received 8 February 2014; accepted 29 March 2014
Available online 7 November 2014

We report the case of a 70-year-old man with cardiovascular
risk factors and a history of a heart murmur diagnosed dur-
ing infancy, presenting with worsening exertional dyspnea
during the previous six months. The physical examination
showed a slow-rising carotid pulse, a grade III/VI mid-
systolic murmur, crepitant rales on pulmonary auscultation
and peripheral edema. Laboratory tests revealed a normal
complete blood count, plasma brain natriuretic peptide
level of 2500 pg/ml, normal levels of ionized calcium and
phosphate and normal renal function. Echocardiographic
study showed concentric left ventricular (LV) hypertrophy
with preserved ejection fraction, mild diastolic dysfunction
(impaired relaxation) and severe aortic valve stenosis with
a valve area of 0.6 cm²/m². Calcified masses were also
observed in the mid-LV cavity on 2D and 3D echocardiog-
raphy (Figure 1A and B, arrows; Videos 1 and 2), causing
turbulent flow depicted by color Doppler (Figure 1C; Video
3). Steady-state free precession cine cardiac magnetic
resonance (CMR) confirmed the presence of a transversely
arranged membrane, suggestive of an anomalous, abnor-
mal thickened and calcified band (Figure 1D and E,
arrowsheads; Video 4). This non-obstructive structure was
connected to the anterolateral papillary muscle and the
lateral LV wall by multiple fibrous filaments. The presence
of fibrosis was excluded by late gadolinium enhancement CMR.

LV false tendons are fibromuscular structures of vary-
ing length and thickness that traverse the ventricular
cavity and are accepted as anatomic variants. Calcium
deposits in the heart are common in older persons and have
been described in association with coronary artery disease,
dilated cardiomyopathy, aorto-mitral valvular disease and
renal disease. We report a case of massive left ventricu-
lar false tendon calcification associated with aortic valve
calcification and stenosis.

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Figure 1  (A) Two-dimensional transthoracic echocardiography, apical 4-chamber view, showing several nodular hyperechogenic masses with acoustic shadowing in the mid-left ventricular cavity (arrows); (B) three-dimensional transthoracic echocardiography, left ventricular full-volume view depicting all of the nodular masses within the left ventricular cavity (arrows); (C) two-dimensional Doppler color flow transesophageal echocardiography, mid-esophageal 3-chamber view with turbulent flow across the mid-left ventricular cavity; (D and E) steady-state free precession cine cardiac magnetic resonance, short-axis and 3-chamber long-axis views with a hypointense linear structure inside the left ventricle (arrowheads). LA: left atrium; LV: left ventricle; LVOT: left ventricular outflow tract; RV: right ventricle.

Ethical disclosures

Protection of human and animal subjects. The authors declare that the procedures followed were in accordance with the regulations of the relevant clinical research ethics committee and with those of the Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki).

Confidentiality of data. The authors declare that they have followed the protocols of their work center on the publication of patient data.

Right to privacy and informed consent. The authors have obtained the written informed consent of the patients or subjects mentioned in the article. The corresponding author is in possession of this document.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.repc.2014.03.015.