An Alternative Treatment for Iatrogenic Coronary Perforation

To the Editor:

The perforation or rupture of the coronary artery during percutaneous intervention is a feared complication, despite its relatively low incidence (0.2%-0.8% of all interventions). This is due to its high mortality rate, and patients have a worse prognosis in the short- and medium-term than the total population undergoing revascularization procedures. Among the possible factors predicting its appearance are clinical ones (advanced age, female sex, kidney failure), angiographic factors (coronary artery calcification and tortuosity, and type-C lesions) and technique-associated factors (use of hydrophilic guides, atherectomy devices, optimization of PTCA outcome by the use of intracoronary ultrasound, high-pressure stent postdilatation). It is accepted that initial management first involves the inflation of an angioplasty balloon proximal to or at the level of the perforation to seal the leak and perform pericardiocentesis, if cardiac tamponade is present. This would also allow intravenous protamine to be administered to counteract unfractionated heparin (if used). The approach from this point on is less clearly established, and it is possible to opt for conservative management, if the measures previously described solve the problem; otherwise, the patients might require urgent surgical intervention, which has the worst prognosis. Non-surgical alternatives include the use of conventional or coated (basically PTFE) stents and embolization with different materials: metal coils, coagulated blood from the patient, thrombin, or polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) particles.

We present the case of a 65-year-old male patient who presented non-ST-segment elevation acute coronary syndrome and was referred for catheterization. Coronary angiography showed full occlusion of unknown duration in the mediodistal segment of the right coronary artery (RCA) with good diameter, without being able to visualize the distal vessel (absence of collateral circulation), and without left dominance. In the absence of other coronary lesions, cardiological intervention was chosen using a hydrophilic guidewire which was advanced through the occlusion, ending in an RCA branch that was parallel to the main vessel distal segment (this was not visualized due to the absence of collateral circulation); a notch can be seen in the central part of the balloon, which disappeared after increasing the pressure to 12 atm. C: perforation of the branch occurs, with formation of periadventitial hematoma that progressively increases in size. D: finally, rupture of the vessel with contrast medium leaking into the pericardial cavity.

Figure 1. A: full occlusion of unknown duration in the mediodistal right coronary artery. B: advance of the hydrophilic guide and dilatation with a 2.5-mm×20-mm balloon in the right coronary branch parallel to the main vessel distal segment; a notch can be seen in the central part of the balloon, which disappeared after increasing the pressure to 12 atm. C: perforation of the branch occurs, with formation of periadventitial hematoma that progressively increases in size. D: finally, rupture of the vessel with contrast medium leaking into the pericardial cavity.
In cases like this one, where the need for urgent surgical repair was avoided.

Tomás Cantón, Fernando Pajín, Carlos Lanciego, and José Moreu
Unidad de Cardiología Intervencionista, Servicio de Cardiología, Hospital Virgen de la Salud, Toledo, Spain.

REFERENCES