Aorto carotid bypass in Takayasu’s disease

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Takayasu’s disease is a young age female predominant (9/1 F/M ratio) nonspecific arteritis of unknown etiology affecting primarily the aorta and its main branches. Its clinical presentation is confined to acute or chronic symptoms and signs related to ischemia due to stenosis, occlusion, Arterial dilatation or aneurysm formation. It also defines as asymptomatic pulseless disease and has other synonyms: aortic arch syndrome, Martorell’s syndrome, atypical coarctation, brachiocephalic arteritis and idiopathic aortitis. The yearly incidence is approximately 2.6-6.4 per million and occurs most prevalent in the Far East. Basically, in spite of unknown origin, few kinds of genetic and autoimmune predisposition with strong relation to tuberculosis have been considered. Patients may sustain some inflammatory symptoms include: fever, myalgia, arthralgia, malaise and weight loss that usually have been presented in rheumatological features. It may also presents with a various spectrum of ischemia, unexpected hypertension or specific vascular carotodynia complaints. Most patients present with arterial insufficiency symptoms. There are 4 types based on local arterial involvement: Type I, localized to aortic arch and its branches. Type II, is involvement of descending and abdominal aorta and its branches (coarctation form). Type III, reveals types I and II manifestations. Type IV, presents types I through III combined with pulmonary artery involvement. Type III of Takayasu’s disease is the most common type and always contains a variety of clinical manifestations responsible for more affected arteries that are being occluded due to prevalent pan arteritis which is seen during early or late course of the disease. There is no any specific laboratory test which be able to confirm it but in general, the tests related to the form of acute or chronic rheumatic or non specific collagen illnesses may become positive. Almost always, ESR could be the best available denominator for following up in acute phase and relapse. However, it is far from using the tests for prompt decision making. Still, angiography remains the most valuable technique for diagnosis, otherwise, magnetics resonance angiography can be the alternative.

This report introduces a rare clinical presentation of an angiographically confirmed (26-years-old) female patient; a case of Takayasu’s disease type III, under management of rheumatologist who diagnosed her 3 months before admission. Her chief complaint was dizziness and severe continuous headache, repeated fainting on standing or erect position, and dark-blurred vision for one week during her housekeeping before admission. She was already admitted for acute abdomen and passed a surgical procedure of 70 cm small intestinal resection for unknown etiology of bowel gangrene in Tehran with no other past history or considerable medical problem. On physical examination she had no any thrill or bruit to be considered in bilateral carotid palpation or auscultation and also no radial, ulnar, brachial, axillary and carotid pulses bilaterally; whereas, her lower extremities pulses were normally detected. Her laboratory tests revealed normal, and so emergency (closed cerebral supported) angiogram under the impression of acute carotid occlusion was requested as in our sense, there was no preferred indication for duplex scanning. The angiography showed complete aortic branches occlusion (Figure 1) except for the only appearance of 90% narrowed run off flow to right common carotid and vertebral artery via brachiocephalic artery. Also, subdiaphragmatic supra renal aortic aneurysm and left renal artery stenosis, complete original obstruction of celiac and superior mesenteric arteries with delayed appearance of superior mesenteric had been shown.

Thus, she was prepared to have a bridge aortocarotid bypass. We used a straight 20 cm length, 8 mm diameter knitted Dacron graft as of improper saphenous vein and performed the procedure through mid sternotomy and upward continuous anterior sternocleidomastoid incision. In the operating field we measured the distal pressure of right common carotid artery before bifurcation. The post stenotic pressure which was the only accessible cerebral circulation indicator, was unbelievably zero, but when we pressed the artery, at the mid common carotid point, the pressure gradient was kept around 30-34 mm Hg. Presumably, the lack of the gradient indicated a negative circulatory balance, perhaps due to the short of velocity and consequently, induced rapid blood evacuation toward the circle of Villis as the hanger of brain circulation. At the end of reconstruction, distal
native artery pressure was 63-65 mm Hg and in the
graft was approximately 80, in spite of 130 mm Hg via
femoral artery. We could not take any aortic wall
biopsy due to severe fibrosis. Immediately post
operative, all the symptoms relieved and she
discharged on her fifth post operative day
uneventfully and followed for 4 months by physical
examination and confirmation of color doppler
and found her asymptomatic with normal activities.
Classically, it is not expected that anyone be able to
predict the real incidence of specific arterial
involvement in Takayasu’s disease. Subclavian artery,
descending aorta, renal artery, carotid artery, ascending
aorta, and abdominal aorta are the most commonly
affected arteries.1,2 Carotid involvement can produce
lethal complications, and usually the lateralizing stroke
is the main presentation, while it may accompany with
transient ischemic attack and amaurosis fugax. There
is high incidence of dizziness and syncope.1,2 Common
carotid artery involves in the form of long area of
stenosis without progression to bifurcation during the
process. The intima is soft and smooth without any
ulceration; therefore, thromboembolic process is
unlikely. The best approach to tackle the problem is
ascending aorta-carotid bridge graft bypass as the
ascending aorta has only 5% incidence of
involvement.1 Reconstruction also can be achieved in
the other manner of performing vertebral-carotid,
subclavian-carotid, axillo-carotid, carotid-carotid,
thyrocervical-carotid,1 internal thoracic-carotid4 and
hypogastric-carotid bypass. It is preferred to use the
autogenous saphenous graft1 or PTFE for one side
bypass in order to decrease surgical and post operative
complications. However, following bilateral
procedures there might be more possibility of
problems like transient hyperperfusion syndrome.5
Several notices should be considered for surgical
decision making as following1: 1. Close coordination
between medical and surgical team for treatment and
follow up. 2. Consideration of systemic medical
problems. 3. Avoiding urgent or emergency surgery. 4.
avoiding surgical procedures during acute phase. 5.
Synthetic graft material should be avoided if
possible. 6. Consideration of hypercoagulopathy due
to aortitis. Surgical graft bypass in Takayasu’s arteritis
has own technical complications related to disease
behavior. Less thrombosis and more probable false
aneurysm are considered. Regarding the survival,
excellent long term graft patency may be obtained after
arterial reconstruction. Conclusively, Takayasu’s
arteritis usually diagnoses at the time that the patient
possesses the progressed complications of disease on
her arterial system; therefore, meticulous history and
angiogram are the key diagnosis. The surgeons should
be aware of the process of the arteritis; besides,
matched therapeutic team cooperation is crucial.
Bypass grafting is always inevitable in critical
occlusive features and predilection needs to be focused
on producing normal distal arterial run off maintained
by continuous effective steroid handling by internist.
Although long patency is expected and obviously owes
the effects of corticosteroid therapy but, recurrence
during and after exacerbation have to be mentioned. It
should be emphasis that this disease must be surgically
differentiated from atherosclerosis as there is no place
for attempting endartrectomy whatsoever.

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