A rare case of biventricular non-compaction

Masood Pasha Syed, Adhirath Doshi, Deepali Pandey, Yugandhara Kate, Robert Harizi

1Department of Internal Medicine, Saint Vincent Hospital, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA
2Department of Cardiology, Saint Vincent Hospital, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA

Correspondence to Dr Deepali Pandey; drdeepalipandey05@gmail.com

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DESCRIPTION

A 59-year-old man with a history of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) presented with progressive dyspnoea and bilateral leg swelling over 3–4 weeks. He had dyspnoea on moderate exertion at the baseline but progressed to symptoms at rest along with new onset of orthopnoea. He reported no chest pain, palpitations, syncope, fever, chills, wheezing or productive cough. His mother and brother died at ages 54 and 44, respectively, after developing heart failure of unknown aetiology. He has a smoking history of 40 pack-year. His physical examination on admission revealed stable vitals, elevated jugular venous pulse (JVP), normal S1 and S2 sounds, regular heart rate, no murmur, rubs or gallop, diminished breath sounds in bilateral bases with occasional wheezing and bibasilar rales. His lower extremities revealed bilateral 1+ non-tender pitting oedema with clubbing.

The electrocardiogram showed sinus tachycardia with a right axis deviation with evidence of left ventricular hypertrophy and right atrial enlargement. There were no ischaemic changes. Chest X-ray (CXR) was normal. An echocardiogram showed global hypokinesia with a left ventricular ejection fraction of 35%–40% with grade I diastolic dysfunction and probable non-compaction of the left ventricle (figures 1 and 2). Right ventricular function and right ventricular systolic pressure were normal. A provisional diagnosis of left ventricular non-compaction (LVNC) was made. He was started on furosemide, lisinopril and carvedilol. Bilateral cardiac catheterisation showed normal coronary arteries with elevated pulmonary wedge pressure consistent with non-ischaemic cardiomyopathy. Cardiac MRI confirmed increased trabeculation in both ventricular apices with impaired biventricular systolic function confirming biventricular non-compaction (BVNC) cardiomyopathy (figures 3–5).

Non-compaction is thought to be due to intranatal arrest of compaction of the loose interwoven meshwork present in fetal myocardial primordium.1,2 Alternatively, the pronounced hypertrabeculation may be due to altered regulation in cell proliferation, differentiation and maturation during ventricular wall formation.1,2 Clinically, it may have variable manifestations of heart failure, chest pain, thromboembolic events, atrial and ventricular arrhythmias and risk of sudden cardiac arrest.1,2 It is recommended to undergo Holter monitoring to screen for arrhythmias as there is a role of an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD).1 Oral anticoagulation is recommended if there is arrhythmia, atrial or ventricular thrombi or for primary prevention of thrombus in case of left ventricular (LV) dysfunction.1 Our patient presented...
with new-onset heart failure with biventricular systolic dysfunction, and non-obstructive coronary artery disease (CAD) on cardiac catheterisation suggesting BVNC to be aetiology of heart failure. There have been very few cases of patients with BVNC reported, presenting as heart failure, tonic-clonic seizure. Holter monitor did not reveal any arrhythmias and he did not meet criteria for ICD placement or anticoagulation. A recent Holter monitor did not reveal any arrhythmias and he did not meet criteria for ICD placement or anticoagulation. A recent follow-up cardiac MRI showed persistent BVNC but normalisation of LV systolic dysfunction with optimal guideline-directed medical therapy for cardiomyopathy. Genetic counselling was advised as it can be familial. He chose not to be evaluated as he improved symptomatically with medical therapy and continues to be in the follow-up. In our patient, we can speculate that the family history of heart failure of unknown aetiology was likely due to non-compaction cardiomyopathy.

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