Retained Solitaire FR device after mechanical thrombectomy: Case review and management strategies

Jay P. Kinariwala, Gary B. Rajah, Ali W. Luqman

Abstract:
Solitaire FR device is a Food and Drug Administration-approved device for mechanical thrombectomy. It has been tested in various clinical trials for its safety and efficacy. We report a case of inadvertent detachment of the Solitaire FR device at stent–stent wire interface while performing mechanical thrombectomy. We review a rare phenomenon of retained Solitaire FR stent retriever in situ and discuss technique of avoidance and its management.

Keywords:
Acute ischemic stroke, retained device, Solitaire, thrombectomy

Introduction
Mechanical thrombectomy has become standard of care for emergent large vessel occlusion.[1] Stentriever-based thrombectomy at our institution is performed with Solitaire FR (Medtronic) or Trevo (Stryker), both made from nitinol. Solitaire FR is available in diameters of 4–6 and lengths of 15–40 mm with parametric design,[2] closed cell and open end, mounted on nondetachable 0.016” pusher wire. Trevo has tapered ends and hydrophilic coating, closed thought for delivering radial force, and mounted on 0.018” pusher wire.[3] Both devices have demonstrated excellent safety profiles in large meta-analysis.[4] To the best of our knowledge, no device detachments have been reported to date for Solitaire FR.

Case Report
An elderly man was brought to the emergency room for sudden onset of the left hemiplegia and initial NIHSS of 22. Last seen normal by his family members was nearly 3 h from arrival to the emergency room. No tissue-type plasminogen activator was administered due to refusal from family. The initial computed tomography (CT) head revealed loss of gray-white differentiation in the right insular ribbon. CT angiogram revealed total occlusion in M1 segment of the right middle cerebral artery (MCA) and partially occlusive thrombus in A1 segment of right anterior cerebral artery. CT perfusion showed a penumbra in MCA territory. At 4 h from the last known well, he was taken to angiography suite for emergent thrombectomy. A 9F-Cello balloon guide catheter (Medtronic), 5F-Berenstein II catheter, and 0.035” glide advantage wire (Terumo) were carefully navigated into right common carotid artery (CCA) under fluoroscopic guidance. 9F-Cello was parked at the bifurcation of right CCA with its tip in the proximal portion of the right internal carotid artery (ICA). First images demonstrated proximal MCA occlusion [Figure 1a]. A Marksman microcatheter (Medtronic) over a Fathom 16 micro-wire (Boston Scientific) was navigated through the thrombus into inferior M2 branch of the right MCA. It proved to be difficult due to

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severe intracranial atherosclerotic disease and extremely tortuous anatomy [Figure 2b]. A 4 mm × 40 mm Solitaire FR device (Medtronic) was then loaded and pushed to the end of the microcatheter beyond the thrombus. Deployment was performed with standard push-pull technique, with the Marksman microcatheter just distal to the proximal marker. After 4 min of delay, angiographic images with the device in situ demonstrated partial recanalization and delayed perfusion in the territory with small amount of retained thrombus in the proximal M2 segment of right MCA [Figure 1b]. The device was retrieved with slow gentle traction and 9F-Cello with balloon inflated under aspiration. The retrieval wire relayed every click from intracranial atherosclerosis. A red thrombus was visible on the retrieved device. Deployment was performed with standard push-pull technique; however, this time, the device was placed using the same device in similar fashion, using the same technique in a way that the latter is nondetachable in design. The Solitaire AB device differs from the Solitaire FR device up showing improved distal flow (arrow). (f) Final anterior-posterior internal carotid artery/common carotid artery injection showing slightly quicker anterograde flow through retained stent (arrow). (g) Retained device distal markers visible on anterior-posterior image near the arrow.

Discussion

We found a few stentriever retainment reports during thrombectomy. In a case report of early unwanted detachment in the initial trials of Solitaire AB, the device detached and retained within the M1 segment in a patient undergoing thrombectomy who had tortuous anatomy and large thrombus burden. Recanalization was achieved in this study utilizing intra-arterial urokinase. The Solitaire AB device differs from the Solitaire FR device in a way that the latter is nondetachable in design. Cobb et al. recently reported a retained Solitaire device during mechanical thrombectomy for tandem occlusion which became entangled and retained upon removal against a precise carotid stent, which was subsequently removed by staged carotid endarterectomy. Of the five device detachments reported in a review table by Kwon et al., Solitaire AB was utilized in four of them, and only one Solitaire FR device was used during the SWIFT trial. Solitaire AB has been known to break at the carotid–stent wire interface. Castano et al. reported that six out of 262 cases of Solitaire device detachment (2.3%) classified into proximal to the marker versus distal. Retrieval was possible in the 3/4th proximal disconnections. Symptomatic intracranial hemorrhage (33% vs. 4%) and poor outcomes were more likely associated with detached devices. The number of prior passes was found to be directly proportional.
We believe that tortuous anatomy and severe intracranial atherosclerotic disease played a role in the malfunction of our device as the device was retrieved once without issue. There are no measures available to us at this time to quantify the risk of the stent retriever detachment based on tortuosity and atherosclerotic burden. Kang et al. verified that during their retained stent removal, the device was caught on severe calcified suprachoroidal ICA. However, possible device malfunction cannot be ruled out as the detachment occurred exactly just distal to the proximal markers at the stent–stent wire ball and socket–joint interface. Had the stent sheared in half, the mechanism could be more anatomy related.

Management strategies include different snare techniques, either over a guidewire or a catheter with a gooseneck snare or an alligator snare. Stent removal techniques have been described by Parthasarathy et al. such as “deploy and engage,” which involves deployment of another device into the proximal end of the first and subsequent stent removal by the “loop and snare” technique which involves passing a microcatheter or a guide wire through the device and looping it back to be snared everything as an entire unit. Finally, if everything fails, dual antiplatelets or heparin drip may be considered. Surgical removal of a stent from the ICA terminus has been reported as well with an arteriotomy closure utilizing a clip/suture technique with flow preservation. Any removal attempt in tortuous vessel anatomy carries the risk of vessel rupture, and surgical planning should include options to treat this complication.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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