CASE REPORT

Coronary revascularisation in cardiac amyloidosis

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Abstract
We present a case of coronary artery bypass grafting in a 78-year-old man with triple vessel disease and concomitant cardiac amyloidosis. Postoperatively, he developed a profound low cardiac output state and multiorgan failure. He died 3 weeks following surgery. Bypass surgery is rarely performed in patients with cardiac amyloidosis, and there is little in the literature regarding outcomes. The few published cases present a bleak picture, and hence percutaneous coronary intervention should always be preferred.

KEYWORDS
cardiac amyloidosis, cardiac surgery, coronary artery bypass

1 | INTRODUCTION

We present a case of coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) in a patient with cardiac amyloidosis (CA) complicated by low cardiac output state (LCOS), multiorgan failure, and death 3 weeks following surgery.

2 | CASE PRESENTATION

A 78-year old gentleman with wild-type CA was referred for consideration of CABG. During an amyloid clinic walk test, he suffered a cardiac arrest secondary to ventricular fibrillation. Spontaneous circulation returned after a single direct current electrical cardioversion. Myocardial ischemia was thought to be causative and coronary angiography revealed triple vessel coronary artery disease with left main stem involvement (Figure 1). Cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (Figure 2) was characteristic of CA, with severe biventricular hypertrophy, mildly reduced left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) of 58%, and severely reduced longitudinal function of both ventricles. On tissue characterization, transmural late gadolinium enhancement was present with biventricular involvement.

Other medical history included percutaneous intervention (PCI) to the left anterior descending artery (LAD) 2 years previously and paroxysmal atrial fibrillation. The patient’s baseline functional classification was New York Heart Association II.

The case was discussed in the coronary intervention multidisciplinary team meeting. Input from amyloid specialists suggested that if the patient were not to have coronary artery disease, prognosis for CA would be 60 to 84 months. Euroscore II suggested a 2.32% mortality risk, but due to the severity of CA, this was felt to be a considerable underestimate. Given complex coronary anatomy and left main stem involvement, albeit in the presence of CA, consensus decision was for high-risk inpatient CABG. Considering good LVEF of 58% and excellent functional baseline, balanced mortality risk of 5% to 8% was quoted.

The surgery took place 2 weeks later. The heart was extremely hypertrophic and beefy, and cardiac manipulation was impossible. Perioperative transesophageal echocardiography (TOE) revealed severe biventricular hypertrophy with preserved systolic function. Three bypass grafts were undertaken: saphenous vein conduits to the posterior descending artery and first obtuse marginal, and pedicled left internal mammary artery to the LAD. The patient came off cardiopulmonary bypass easily on low-dose milrinone. In view of

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J Card Surg. 2020:35:3248–3250.
severe LV hypertrophy, an intra-aortic balloon pump was placed via the right femoral artery.

Over the next 24 hours, the patient became increasingly hypotensive and vasoplegic. Worsening metabolic acidosis ensued despite fluid resuscitation and increasing vasopressor and inotropic support with noradrenaline, vasopressin, and milrinone. A Swan-Ganz catheter was inserted, and cardiac index calculated at 1.8 L/min/m² with low systemic vascular resistance. TOE showed a small pericardial collection. Given continued deterioration, the patient returned to the theater for resternotomy to exclude tamponade. All conduits were patent, and whilst some clot was evacuated from the pericardium there was no consequent change in hemodynamics. As there was no evidence of tamponade and Swan-Ganz measurements did not suggest pulmonary hypertension to be significant, the chest was again closed with the closure performed easily and tolerated well. The patient was then returned to ICU with an adrenaline infusion added.

Over the following days, the clinical condition slowly improved. Inotropic and vasopressor requirements decreased, and the balloon pump was removed 3 days postoperatively allowing tracheal extubation. As a result of prolonged LCOS, liver and renal failure ensued. The patient developed marked jaundice and required continuous renal replacement therapy. Hemodynamics continued to stabilize over the subsequent 2 weeks allowing weaning of inotropic support. Despite this, there was no resolution of organ failure and he remained jaundiced and filter dependent. Three weeks following surgery, the patient again deteriorated with a profound LCOS, requiring increasing doses of noradrenaline, milrinone, and adrenaline. Echocardiogram showed severe biventricular impairment with low stroke volume and high filling pressures, but no evidence of tamponade. In the context of CA and multiorgan failure, consensus opinion was that further escalation in treatment (resternotomy/invasive ventilation and organ support) would be futile. Following family discussions, a do-not-resuscitate order was completed and the decision for no further escalation in treatment agreed. The patient died shortly thereafter.

**3 | COMMENT**

Amyloidosis is a group of rare heterogeneous diseases characterized by the abnormal extracellular deposition of toxic insoluble fibrillar protein that aggregates in different tissues. The incidence of CA is estimated at 18 to 55 per 100,000 person-years and is commonly associated with immunoglobulin light chain (AL) or transthyretin amyloid (ATTR). AL is a result of the extracellular deposition of fibril-forming monoclonal immunoglobulin light-chains, usually secreted by a plasma cell clone. ATTR is most frequently wild-type (wtATTR) and acquired, associated with male gender, and increasing age, but maybe hereditary with mutated forms of transthyretin. The dominant pathophysiology of CA is biventricular restrictive cardiomyopathy and resultant diastolic followed by systolic heart failure.
Common complications include conduction disorders, embolic events, and syncope. In the absence of epicardial coronary artery disease, angina is associated with obstructive intraluminal coronary microangiopathy. CA carries a poor prognosis, with a median survival of 24 to 66 months in AL, and 75 months in ATTR.\(^2\)

Treatment involves the management of heart failure using loop diuretics and aldosterone antagonists; beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors are often not tolerated. The underlying disease can be targeted with chemotherapy\(^+-\) autologous stem cell transplantation to eradicate the plasma cell clone responsible for AL amyloid, and in wtATTR Tafamidis given (a drug which stabilizes the transthyretin tetramer and therefore may reduce the formation of ATTR amyloid).\(^3\)

Management of coronary artery disease with coexisting CA is challenging. What angiographically appears as surgical disease does not exclude underlying obstructive intraluminal microangiopathy, and results of revascularisation are therefore difficult to predict. Current preoperative risk models such as Euroscore II are invalid in patients with CA, as diastolic dysfunction is not considered. Usual indicators for preoperative risk such as functional status and LVEF may offer false reassurance.

There is a growing body of evidence for the association between aortic stenosis and CA, with this subgroup of patients at increased risk following surgical valve replacement.\(^4\) Although more limited, current evidence of mitral valve surgery in patients with concomitant CA report excellent outcomes.\(^5\) Data on bypass surgery are far more limited but given reasonable reported outcomes in other cardiac surgical procedures, our initial view was that surgery, whilst high risk, was a reasonable approach. Subsequently, we are aware of only four published case reports (comprising five patients) of CABG in patients with CA. Four patients died shortly after surgery due to profound LCOS\(^6\)\(^-\)\(^8\); and one survived the initial postoperative period only to succumb to electromechanical dissociation a few months later.\(^9\)

Given our experience and the evidence available, we now conclude that PCI must be preferred to CABG, even when coronary anatomy would normally suggest surgery the intervention of choice.

4 | SUMMARY

Cardiac amyloidosis is a rare disease associated with poor prognosis. Although there is some evidence that cardiac surgery can be offered to select patients with concomitant valve disease, outcomes following surgical revascularization are universally poor. Even in highly selected patients, surgical intervention is difficult to justify, and percutaneous options must be preferred.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interests.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Local IRB ethical clearance was waived and next of kin consent obtained.

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How to cite this article: Smith A, Edlin J, Hinds C, Ambekar S. Coronary revascularisation in cardiac amyloidosis. J Card Surg. 2020;35:3248–3250. https://doi.org/10.1111/jocs.14985