Pericardial Tamponade during Supra Hepatic IVC Angioplasty in Budd-Chiari Syndrome Managed by Ultrasound-Guided Pericardiocentesis

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Introduction

Role of endovascular interventions has increased in the treatment of inferior vena cava (IVC) occlusion including Budd-Chiari syndrome, since surgical options are limited. Fibrous component in thrombus, anatomical narrowing of IVC, the ambiguity of course of IVC to the atrium, and inability to assess across occlusion are all challenges faced in interventions in Budd-Chiari syndrome. The occurrence of iatrogenic cardiac tamponade is a rare complication of IVC venoplasty. Herein, we present a case that highlights the importance of timely anticipation of this near-fatal event and management of pericardial tamponade in salvaging the patient’s life.

Case Report

A 33-year-old gentleman presented with bilateral varicose veins, dilated abdominal wall veins, and delayed healing ulcers on the left side for the past 10 years. Ultrasonography revealed complete occlusion in the supra hepatic IVC. Magnetic resonance imaging revealed hepatomegaly and confirmed the occlusion for 1.8 cm (Fig. 1A). The patient was taken up for IVC venoplasty through the right common femoral vein and right internal jugular vein venous accesses. Venogram confirmed occlusion of the IVC with flow via collaterals into the superior vena cava and right atria (RA) in the delayed phase (Fig. 2). The occlusion was crossed using 0.035” wire using a 7F long sheath and a 5F support catheter. The distal end of the catheter was confirmed to be within the RA by contrast injection. The wire was exchanged for a 0.035” stiff wire and venoplasty was initially done using 4 x 20 mm (diameter x length) balloon. Further, venoplasty was done using a 10 x 40mm balloon. The patient developed sudden dyspnea and chest pain with a fall in blood pressure to 60/30 mm Hg. Electrocardiogram showed sudden drop in QRS voltages in all leads. Immediate ultrasonography showed large pericardial hemorrhage with tamponade. Emergency pericardiocentesis was done under ultrasound guidance with two 16G needles placed from the left para cardiac region, which drained ~4200 to 250 mL of blood. Heparin reversal with protamine (25 mg given as 5000U heparin was given around 90 minutes prior to the event) was done and 10 x 40 mm balloon was kept partially inflated across the cavoatrial junction to prevent further hemorrhage. The patient was intubated and hemodynamically stabilized. The balloon was kept partially inflated for 30 minutes, until the venogram showed no residual leak. The patient was extubated on the same day. Postoperative day 1 ultrasound showed improved flow across the supra hepatic IVC with and no residual hemorrhage.

Discussion

The incidence of pericardial tamponade is not uncommon with incidences of 0.75 to 0.99% in cases undergoing IVC venoplasty for Budd-Chiari syndrome. The endovascular procedure with highest incidence of pericardial hemorrhage includes IVC filter with strut fracture/migration. Other causes excluding intracardiac/coronary procedures include mediastinal biopsies, aortic stent-graft placement, and
central venous port insertion. IVC-RA junction is in close relation with the pericardium that forms a recess around the vena cava. The nature of the obstruction in Budd-Chiari syndrome may require high inflation pressures. Situations wherein there is higher risk of pericardial hemorrhage during IVC venoplasty include cases of left hepatic vein obstruction, left hepatic vein/middle hepatic vein) complex involvement, and use of sharp needles to negotiate the occlusion. The former is due to the anatomical configuration of the left hepatic vein being closer to the pericardium than the right hepatic vein. In our case, we presume leak to have occurred due to tear at the time of balloon dilation at the fibrotic occlusion site as no leak was detected in intervening venograms after initial wire passage or dilation.

Pericardiocentesis is a lifesaving in cases of pericardial tamponade. Three approaches for performing pericardiocentesis include subxiphoid, parasternal, and apical approaches (Fig. 3). When done under ultrasound guidance, the needle is directed into the deepest pocket of hemorrhage avoiding intervening structures. Slight reverse Trendelenburg positioning may improve the visualization. The subxiphoid approach is the safest approach in unguided insertion. The parasternal approach has risk of pneumothorax and apical approach of left ventricular puncture. A guidewire is introduced through the needle followed by pigtail catheter insertion for prolonged drainage. Also, the catheter can be connected back into a peripheral venous cannula as in autotransfusion with risks of thrombus and disseminated intravascular coagulation. Surgical pericardial window may be created if not responding to catheter drainage.

Hence, interventionalists should be aware of cardiac tamponade that may occur in procedures involving the
cavoatrial junction and performing pericardiocentesis in such situations as an immediate standard bailout procedure since the time to act is very less.

Authors’ Contributions
All the authors have contributed for data collection, design, and manuscript preparation.

Conflicts of Interest
None declared.

References