Case Report

Subarachnoid Hemorrhage Due to Ruptured Intracranial Aneurysm Arising from a Vertebral Artery-Bihemispheric Posterior Inferior Cerebellar Artery Bifurcation

Yasushi Ogasawara, Hiroshi Kashimura, Kenta Aso, Hiroaki Saura

Although the anatomy of the posterior inferior cerebellar artery (PICA) is highly variable, a solitary PICA supplying both hemispheres of the cerebellum is rare. A 76-year-old woman presented with severe headache and subsequent loss of consciousness and was admitted to our hospital. Initial computed tomography showed subarachnoid hemorrhage. Three-dimensional digital subtraction angiography revealed a saccular aneurysm arising from the right vertebral artery (VA)-PICA bifurcation. The PICA branching from the right VA was enlarged, tortuous, and crossed the midline to supply both cerebellar hemispheres. This right PICA was interpreted as a bihemispheric PICA. Recognizing this variant preoperatively could help prevent complications of surgery. Careful follow-up studies are necessary in cases with bihemispheric PICA to monitor for the development of aneurysm at the junction between the bihemispheric PICA and the VA or the distal portion of the bihemispheric PICA.

Keywords: Aneurysm, bihemispheric posterior inferior cerebellar artery, subarachnoid hemorrhage, variant

INTRODUCTION

The anatomy of the posterior inferior cerebellar artery (PICA) is highly variable. Variant anatomies of the artery include agenesis/hypoplasia, double or duplicated origins, and extracranial or epidural origins. However, a solitary PICA supplying both hemispheres of the cerebellum is rare. We describe herein a rare case of a ruptured aneurysm arising from the bifurcation of the vertebral artery (VA) and a bihemispheric PICA.

CASE REPORT

A 76-year-old woman presented with severe headache and subsequent loss of consciousness and was admitted to our hospital. No focal neurological abnormality was noted. Initial computed tomography showed subarachnoid hemorrhage, predominantly in the right side of the posterior fossa. Three-dimensional digital subtraction angiography revealed an enlarged, tortuous right PICA that crossed the midline to supply both cerebellar hemispheres and a small saccular aneurysm arising from the right VA-PICA bifurcation [Figure 1a and b]. Right PICA branch proximal to the choroidal point gave rise to ipsilateral vermian branches and hemispheric branches, and a branch distal to the choroidal point gave rise to contralateral vermian branches and hemispheric branches [Figure 1c and d]. Left VA angiography revealed agenesis of the left PICA with no opacification of the corresponding cerebellar territory. The right PICA was interpreted as a bihemispheric PICA.

Far lateral suboccipital craniectomy craniotomy was performed inferiorly to include the foramen magnum. The arch of the C1 vertebra was removed from just beyond the midline on the opposite side. The aneurysm was successfully obliterated by clipping with a slightly curved Yasargil titanium mini clip: No. FT712T [Figure 2]. Complete aneurysm occlusion

Address for correspondence: Dr. Hiroshi Kashimura, Department of Neurosurgery, Iwate Prefectural Chubu Hospital, 17-10 Murasakino, Kitakami, Iwate 024-8507, Japan. E-mail: h-kashimura@prof.iwate.jp

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

For reprints contact: reprints@medknow.com

How to cite this article: Ogasawara Y, Kashimura H, Aso K, Saura H. Subarachnoid hemorrhage due to ruptured intracranial aneurysm arising from a vertebral artery-bihemispheric posterior inferior cerebellar artery bifurcation. J Neurosci Rural Pract 2017;8:654-6.
In rare cases, a solitary PICA variant was described by Cullen and Carlson et al. The incidences of bihemispheric PICA were reported in those studies as 0.1% and 3.6%, respectively. Structural anomalies, such as persistent primitive artery, azygos anterior cerebral artery, and fenestration of the intracranial choroidal artery, show higher rates of aneurysm formation compared to other vessels. Careful follow-up studies are thus necessary in cases of bihemispheric PICA to monitor for aneurysm formation. Ogasawara et al. reported that this anomalous artery results in a predisposition toward the formation of aneurysms.

Several cases of ruptured aneurysm have been reported arising from a communicating branch between bilateral distal PICAs, as the so-called PICA communicating artery. This terminology may not be accurate as the communication is not a normal anastomosis and in the reported cases there was typically aplasia or hypoplasia of the contralateral PICA suggesting that there was in fact a bihemispheric PICA. In the present case, the anomalous artery was interpreted as a bihemispheric PICA because of the characteristic findings on angiography. The ruptured aneurysm arose from the bifurcation of the VA and the bihemispheric PICA. Only one other report has described an aneurysm located at the origin of a bihemispheric PICA.

The pathogenesis of associated aneurysms has not been fully clarified. Mechanisms contributing to aneurysm formation may involve either increased local hemodynamic forces resulting from the bihemispheric PICA or structural weakness of the arterial wall. Structural anomalies, such as persistent primitive artery, azygos anterior cerebral artery, hyperplastic anterior choroidal artery, and fenestration of the intracranial arteries, show higher rates of aneurysm formation than other vessels. Careful follow-up studies are thus necessary in cases of bihemispheric PICA to monitor for the development of aneurysm at the junction between the bihemispheric PICA and the VA or the distal portion of the bihemispheric PICA. When treating this aneurysm, it is critical to prevent the patency of the bihemispheric PICA territory, and the vermian variant, serving only the contralateral PICA should be evident although in the reported cases there was typically aplasia or hypoplasia of the contralateral PICA suggesting that there was in fact a bihemispheric PICA.
PICA. Recognizing and reporting this variant could be helpful in preventing complications of surgery. Although injury to the bihemispheric PICA itself is unlikely to result in clinical deficits, precise knowledge of the vascular anatomy, including such variants, is essential to help minimize complications.

Declaration of patient consent
The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form the patient(s) has/have given his/her/their consent for his/her/their images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patients understand that their names and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made to conceal their identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES