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IMAGES IN CARDIOLOGY

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No reflow during carotid stenting

An 82 year old man with severe bilateral (90% on the right side, 80% on the left side) stenosis at the origin of the internal carotid artery (ICA), demonstrated by ultrasound, and recurrent transient ischaemic attacks causing weakness of the left arm was referred for stenting of the right ICA. The patient was pre-treated with aspirin and clopidogrel and the activated clotting time following unfractionated heparin administration was 280 seconds. The right ICA lesion (panel A) was easily passed with a filter-emboli protection system and the device was deployed in the cervical part of the vessel. Thereafter, balloon pre-dilatation and self expanding stent deployment were performed. Following balloon post-inflation of the stent, no flow was detectable in the ICA (panel B). On the assumption that the no reflow was caused by thrombus/debris in the filter, the ICA blood column was aspirated with a catheter to catch possible suspended particles. Subsequently, the filter was retrieved. Control angiography demonstrated normal carotid flow with no evidence of either local vessel complications such as dissection or spasm (panel C) or intracranial vessel cut-offs suggesting distal embolisation. The patient remained asymptomatic throughout the procedure. Inspection of the retrieved filter showed a large amount of debris trapped in the device (panel D).

No reflow during carotid stenting occurs typically following post-inflation

Digital subtraction angiography of the right common carotid artery demonstrating severe stenosis at the origin of the internal carotid artery (ICA) (panel A). Panel B shows the absence of flow in the right ICA (black arrows). The white arrow demonstrates the position of the filter-emboli protection system. The final angiographic result is shown in panel C.

of the stent. This phenomenon has to be recognised and properly treated (that is, with aspiration of the blood column in the internal carotid) before filter retrieval in order to prevent distal embolisation.

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Retrieved filter-emboli protection system showing large amount of debris.