Thrombolysis May Dislodge Intracardiac Thrombus

Gregory Y. Chang, MD, FAAN¹

Braksick et al¹ recently presented a case of right middle cerebral artery (MCA) occlusion during intravenous tissue plasminogen activator (IV-tPA) infusion to lyse a left MCA clot. Transesophageal echocardiogram demonstrated left atrial enlargement without thrombus. The authors postulated an intracardiac thrombus may have dislodged during thrombolysis, occluding the right MCA. They stated they are unaware of similar cases.

In 2001, I reported onset of an MCA stroke in a 56-year-old man during IV-tPA infusion for evolving myocardial infarction.² Transesophageal echocardiogram revealed no thrombus. Recent case reports of coronary artery embolism during IV-tPA infusion in patients with stroke further highlight a sinister outcome of intracardiac thrombus lysis.³

Because up to a quarter of patients with acute ischemic stroke have an intracardiac thrombus,⁴ these unusual

complications of IV-tPA should be anticipated and urgent neurological or cardiac endovascular intervention considered.

References

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¹ Department of Neurology, University of California Davis Medical Center, Sacramento, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:

Gregory Y. Chang, University of California Davis Medical Center, 4860 Y St. Suite 3700, Sacramento, CA 95817, USA.
Email: gycchang@ucdavis.edu