Treatment with heparin was started. Transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) showed the presence of a mobile thrombus straddling the patent foramen ovale (PFO) and prolapsing into both atria. Treatment with heparin was started. Five days after admission, repeat TEE revealed a reduction in thrombus dimensions, so anticoagulation therapy was continued. Eleven days after admission, TEE showed complete disappearance of the thrombus.

Keywords: Thrombosis, Patent Foramen Ovale, Pulmonary Embolism.

Monaldi Arch Chest Dis 2013; 80: 137-139.
The patient was discharged after 17 days from admission on anticoagulation therapy. At 1-year follow-up, no thromboembolic events were reported. Moreover, JAK2-V617F mutation has been investigated because of the suspect of polycythemia vera but it was absent.

The patient is now in close follow-up in order to evaluate the possible percutaneous closure of patent foramen ovale once anticoagulation therapy will be discontinued.

A thrombus straddling a PFO is a rare event. It can be associated with pulmonary embolism (more frequently) or systemic paradoxical embolism. Anticoagulation therapy is the first-line approach to this condition. It usually has a favorable outcome, as demonstrated in our case. However, heparin alone may be ineffective because it has no direct action on clot lysis. Surgical treatment may be a valuable option in case of unresolved thrombus. Owing to the risk of thrombus fragmentation, thrombolysis is associated with high mortality and should be used with caution.

Riassunto

Presentiamo il caso di un uomo di 67 anni affetto da embolia polmonare. L'ecocardiografia transesofagea (ETE) mostrava l'immagine di un trombo mobile a cavallo del forame ovale pervio e prolassante in entrambi gli atri. Fu sottoposto a trattamento anticoagulante con eparina. Cinque giorni dopo l'ingresso in ospedale, una seconda ETE mostrava una consistente riduzione delle dimensioni del trombo; fu deciso quindi di continuare il trattamento anticoagulante. Undici giorni dopo, una terza ETE mostrava la completa scomparsa del trombo.

ABBREVIATIONS

TEE = Transesophageal echocardiography
PFO = Patent foramen ovale
ECG = elettrocardiogram

No conflict of interest to declare.
References


