A RARE CORONARY ARTERY ANOMALY: DOUBLE LAD WITH ATHEROSCLEROSIS

Mustafa BÜYÜKATEŞ1, S. Aykut ALTUNKAYA2, S. Akin TURAN1

INTRODUCTION

An anatomic variant of the left anterior descending (LAD) artery is described, namely a double LAD artery. Double LAD artery is a rare coronary artery anomaly; in particular, complete duplication of a coronary artery is reported in 1% of cases by Morettin (1). Most coronary artery anomalies are usually asymptomatic and do not cause any complication. Some coronary artery anomalies, especially ectopically originated anomalous coronary arteries and coronary fistulas, may cause clinical syndromes (2). Double LAD artery can potentially have implications on percutaneous coronary intervention procedures in cases associated with coronary stenosis (3).

CASE REPORT:

A 57-year-old female patient was hospitalized for angina pectoris attacks worsening over the previous one month. Coronary angiography was indicated after routine examinations. The angiography revealed a double LAD coronary artery originating from the normal site. Both extended parallel to each other along the anterior interventricular sulcus (AIVS) until the apex. The first one continued on the right of the apex, and the second on the left. They were almost the same size and length. Septal branches originated from the first LAD artery, and diagonal ones from the second (Figure 1). There was a proximal stenosis of 80% in the first LAD artery and 70% in the second. The left main coronary artery, circumflex artery, and right coronary artery had normal locations without any lesion. Revascularization surgery was indicated.

Operative procedure:

The left internal thoracic artery (LITA) was harvested after median sternotomy and saphenous vein grafting was accomplished under general anesthesia. Cardiopulmonary bypass was initiated after standard aortic and venous cannulations. Both LAD arteries were visualized tracing parallel along the AIVS on the epicardial surface of the left ventricle (Figure 2). The saphenous vein was anastomosed to the LAD artery giving off the diagonal branches and LITA to the LAD artery with septal ones. Proximal anastomosing of the saphenous vein to the aorta after partial clamping was performed. The operation was successful and on the seventh day the patient was discharged without any complication.

DISCUSSION

The wide application of coronary angiography has revealed many anomalies of the coronary arteries, varying in number, origin, course, distribution, and termination. The presence of two arteries in the LAD region is referred to as double LAD, a rare coronary artery anomaly. Recognition of the presence of the addi-
tional LAD artery is important for diagnostic and therapeutic reasons (4).

Spindola-Franco et al. (5) defined this anomaly and classified it into four subtypes according to the origin and course of the long LAD artery as follows (types I to III are similar in their early bifurcation of the proximal LAD artery into two vessels):

Type I: the long LAD artery descends on the left ventricular side of the short LAD artery and then enters the distal AIVS.

Type II: the long LAD artery descends on the right ventricular side of the short LAD artery and enters the distal AIVS.

Type III: the long LAD artery courses deep within the interventricular septum proximally and appears on the epicardial surface in the distal part of the AIVS.

Type IV: the long LAD artery originates from the right coronary artery, traverses the right ventricular infundibulum, and enters the AIVS.

Our case resembles type I when the origin and course of both of the LAD arteries are taken into account. The vessels were almost identical in diameter and length, following a parallel course to each other until reaching the apex. These factors made us think that the case might be a variant of type I.

In our patient, this normally originated LAD artery may be considered interesting because both branches were symmetrically involved with the atherosclerotic process in their proximal segments. Symmetric involvement of double LAD artery with significant coronary stenosis is very rare and serious. Therefore, we think that myocardial revascularization procedures, such as percutaneous coronary intervention or coronary artery bypass grafting, should include both LAD arteries, when each LAD artery has severe stenosis (3, 5). In our patient, therefore, the two branches were revascularized using bypass grafting.

In conclusion, a rare coronary artery anomaly, double LAD artery, was presented. Because the LAD artery is the most important coronary artery, cardiologists and cardiac surgeons should be aware of this rare type of coronary anomaly in patients with coronary artery disease who are undergoing either surgical revascularization or coronary angioplasty.

Correspondence Address
Mustafa Buyukates, MD
Zonguldak Karaelmas University, Faculty of Medicine
Department of Cardiovascular Surgery 67600, Kozlu / ZONGULDAK
Tel: 0372 261 0169 Fax: 0372 261 0155
Email: mustafabuyukates@yahoo.com

REFERENCES