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Spontaneous coronary artery dissection in young women

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Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) is a rare and serious complication triggered by non-atherosclerotic myocardial ischemia or infarction. It is defined as a separation within the arterial wall by intramural hematoma, which can occur by an intimal rupture initiating medial dissection or more commonly by a spontaneous intramedial hemorrhage such as that resulting from disruption of the vasa vasorum. SCAD is a rare but potentially catastrophic condition. Along with a low clinical index of suspicion, the symptoms' presentation of young women compounds the challenge of diagnosing acute non-atherosclerotic coronary artery disease. An additional challenge in young women is the poorly understood entity of non-atherosclerotic coronary artery disease. No guidelines and randomized data define the management regarding SCAD and less consensus are available for pregnancy SCAD. In female sex the association of SCAD with pregnancy, rheumatic polymyalgia, autoimmunity and physical and emotional stress triggers is demonstrated. SCAD related to pregnancy tend to occur within six weeks of delivery but have been reported during early pregnancy and as late as 18 months postpartum, especially in patients still breastfeeding. The presentations of acute coronary syndrome in women at risk should prompt early invasive coronary angiography to rule out SCAD. Clinicians need to be familiar with angiographic appearances of SCAD for prompt diagnosis and with management strategies to appropriately risk stratify, treat, and follow up these patients.

Biography

Fabiola Sozzi works as a staff cardiologist at the University Hospital Policlinico of Milan, Italy, with high-specialization nomination. She has high skills in multimodality imaging of heart disease using echocardiography integrated with cardiac magnetic resonance imaging, cardiac computed tomography and nuclear. She also works in the acute clinical setting treating acute cardiac syndromes. She gained a high expertise in echocardiography at the Thoraxcentre of Rotterdam (NL), where she defended the PhD thesis on stress cardiac imaging under the supervision of Professor J. Roelandt. She is Visiting Professor at the University of Milan where she leads several research projects and teaches at the Faculty of Medicine and School of Specialization of Cardiology. She is author of 70 papers published in indexed peer-reviewed international journals and reviewer of several medical international journals.

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