

IMAGING IN INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE



Kinking, thrombosis and need for re-operation in a patient with a left ventricular assist device

Rahat Muslem¹, Sakir Akin^{1,2*}, Olivier Manintveld¹ and Kadir Caliskan¹© 2016 The Author(s). This article is published with open access at Springerlink.com

A 42-year-old man was re-hospitalized by acute decompensated heart failure (HF) 4 days after discharge. Physical examination revealed a continuous machinery systolic murmur at the second right intercostal space. Transthoracic echocardiogram showed a slight pericardial effusion and no signs of valve dysfunction. A CT scan showed multiple kinks in the left ventricular assist device

(LVAD) outflow graft (Fig. 1). The patient underwent reoperation. At surgery, several clots around the outflow graft and mediastinum were removed, and three kinks near the excessive long outflow graft were confirmed. We performed an uneventful LVAD replacement. He was discharged the next day from ICU and 14 days later from hospital.

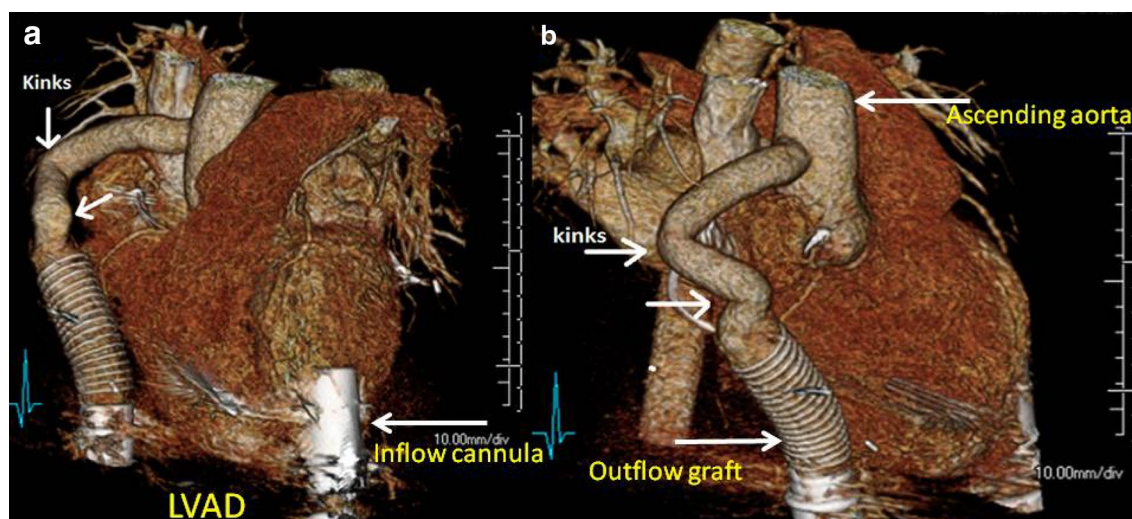


Fig. 1 CT scan of the 42-year-old man with HeartMate II left ventricular assist device (LVAD) demonstrating the multiple kinking of the outflow graft (arrows) due probably to the adjusted outflow graft being too long in the primary implantation. LVADs have been increasingly used for patients with advanced heart failure (HF) with consequent increase in intensive care admission due to adverse events or as initial bridge from extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO)

*Correspondence: sakirakin@gmail.com; s.akin@erasmusmc.nl¹ Department of Cardiology, Erasmus Medical Center, Room BA-577, 's-Gravendijkswal 230, 3015 CE Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Full author information is available at the end of the article

Common complications seen in the first week after LVAD implantation are atrial or ventricular arrhythmias, respiratory failure, delirium, bleeding and renal failure. Outflow graft kinks could lead to LVAD pump thrombosis, dysfunction and relapse of HF, as in our case. This case shows that traditional physical examination, even in these highly technological medical environments, remains meaningful, despite dominant distracting sounds of a continuous-flow LVAD.

Author details

¹ Department of Cardiology, Erasmus Medical Center, Room BA-577, 's-Gravendijkswal 230, 3015 CE Rotterdam, The Netherlands. ² Department of Intensive Care, Erasmus Medical Center, Room H-603a, 's-Gravendijkswal 230, 3015 CE Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflicts of interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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