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Authors: Michał Bohdan, Magdalena Kołaczowska, Alicja Radtke-Łysek, Radosław Targoński, Piotr Siondalski, Jan Rogowski, Marcin Gruchała

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Percutaneous deactivation of left ventricular assist device due to pump thrombosis

Short title: Amplatzer implantation in left ventricular assist device thrombosis

Michał Bohdan¹, Magdalena Kołaczkowska², Alicja Radtke-Łysek¹, Radosław Targoński³,
Piotr Siondalski², Jan Rogowski², Marcin Gruchała¹

¹1st Department of Cardiology, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdańsk, Poland

²Department of Cardiac and Vascular Surgery, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdańsk,
Poland

³University Hospital of Gdansk, Gdańsk, Poland

Correspondence to:

Michał Bohdan, MD, PhD,

1st Department of Cardiology,

Medical University of Gdańsk,

Dębinki 7, 80–211 Gdańsk, Poland,

phone: +48 58 584 4710,

e-mail: michal.bohdan@gumed.edu.pl

A left ventricular assist device (LVAD) is indicated in patients with advanced heart failure and is most commonly used as destination therapy or bridge to heart transplantation [1, 2]. Recently, with the development of the third generation of the devices significant decrease in the number of LVAD-related thromboembolic complications has been observed [3]. However, patients with an LVAD may still experience serious adverse events. We present a patient with a continuous-flow LVAD in whom the device was successfully deactivated with percutaneous Amplatzer implantation due to pump thrombosis.

A 62-year-old male with a history of advanced heart failure with reduced left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF, 20%) due to dilated cardiomyopathy and pulmonary hypertension after LVAD implantation in 2018 (Heartware HVAD, Heartware International, Framingham, Massachusetts) as a bridge to transplantation was admitted to tertiary cardiovascular center following a critical alarm of the LVAD. On admission the patient complained of weakness and reduced exercise capacity for the past several hours. Laboratory assessment revealed elevated lactate dehydrogenase (LDH): 372 U/L (n = 125–220) and NT-proBNP: 4017 pg/ml (n <125),

while INR was 1.96. Transthoracic echocardiography confirmed LVAD thrombosis with no flow in LVAD outflow cannula. Computed tomography angiography of the aorta depicted a patent conduit between the aorta and the LVAD. Subsequently, catheter-based percutaneous LVAD deactivation with implantation of Amplatzer occluder to LVAD outflow graft was performed (Figure 1A, B, Supplementary material, Video S1 and S2). The patient was not LVAD-dependent and remained hemodynamically stable, was treated with levosimendan and required no catecholamines. LVEF remained stable during hospitalization. Anticoagulation was continued. Two weeks after LVAD deactivation, right heart catheterization was performed and no pulmonary hypertension was found. After a heart team discussion the patient was qualified for an urgent heart transplantation. The hospitalization was uneventful and after two weeks the patient requested to be discharged from the hospital against medical advice. The patient remained hemodynamically stable at 1-month follow-up. Despite the fact that the heart donor was found after the following 14 days, the operation was not performed because the patient had died at home due to sudden cardiac arrest shortly before the planned procedure. Patient's family refused to give consent for an autopsy of the deceased to be conducted.

Pump thrombosis is a potentially lethal complication of LVAD therapy that may occur as a result of different mechanisms [4]. Percutaneous LVAD deactivation is a relatively safe and effective method which can be used in properly selected patients as an alternative to surgical treatment in pump thrombosis [5]. Based on our experience we believe that a patient with pump thrombosis should be regarded as an urgent heart transplant recipient provided there are no contraindications for heart transplantation.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available at https://journals.viamedica.pl/kardiologia_polska.

Article information

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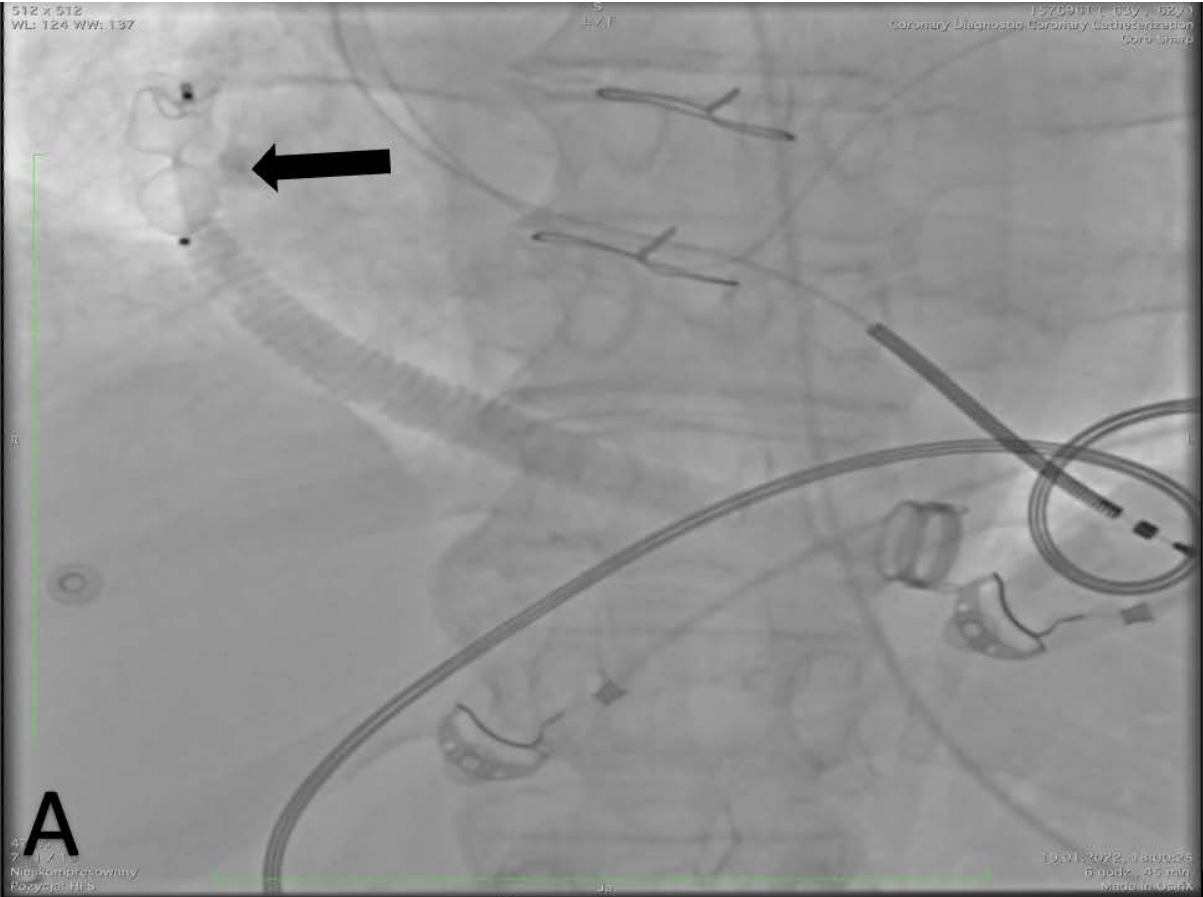


Figure 1. A. Angiography after implantation of the Amplatzer occluder to left ventricular assist device outflow graft, an arrow shows the Amplatzer occlude. **B.** Computed tomography angiography of the aorta. An arrow shows an inflow cannula