

The Heart in a Heart

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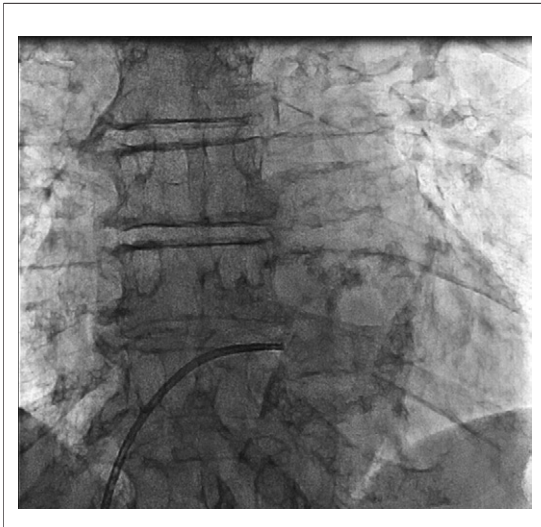


Figure 1. The Heart in a Heart (Online Video 1)

An 82-year-old retired nurse was referred for catheterization because of severe aortic stenosis. The initial images in the antero-posterior projection provided an unexpected gift. Calcification within the heart looked like a heart (Fig. 1, Online

From the Piedmont Heart Institute, Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Mashman has reported that he has no relationships relevant to the contents of this paper to disclose.

Manuscript received October 3, 2012, accepted October 11, 2012.

Video 1). The unintended message briefly caught my attention but was felt to have no clinical significance beyond the expected calcifications. The patient went on to have uneventful aortic valve replacement and coronary bypass.

Sometimes people (including me) see things that are not there. Although the image of “the heart in a heart” is cute, it has no true meaning and is not significant in any way. The shape that the calcifications of the mitral annulus and the aortic valve made in this patient in that particular orientation coincidentally resembled a traditional stylized image of a heart. People see what they want to see, or what they are primed to see. An echocardiographic image of a heart-shaped left ventricular thrombus has been previously reported (1).

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REFERENCE

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Key Words: aortic stenosis ■ calcification ■ cardiac catheterization ■ cardiac imaging.