suggestive of aspergillosis associated with microbiologic identification in lavage fluid, or a positive galactomannan serum assay.\(^1\) A background inquiry revealed that the patient had moved to a new house and received a large quantity of flowers before the onset of her symptoms. Because the patient was not immunocompromised, a diagnosis of fungal tracheobronchitis was not initially considered; this delayed the diagnosis by 6 months, which is in agreement with the literature.\(^2\) In immunocompetent patients, we consider Aspergillus tracheobronchitis in the presence of numerous gelatinous whitish plaques in the trachea and right and left bronchi. In this case, the earliest indication of an Aspergillus infection was mucoid impaction along the bronchi. Although hyphae were seen in the biopsy, fungal cultures of sputum and respiratory secretions were negative, and no galactomannan positivity was identified. Mucoid impaction and bronchocentric granulomatosis are seen in half of ABPA cases.\(^4\) After failing to identify an alternative cause, we interpreted bronchocentric granulomatosis in this patient as a histopathologic manifestation of fungal hypersensitivity.\(^4\)

Cases of bronchocentric granulomatosis are classified according to the clinical presentation. The first subtype includes asthma and atopy, while the second subtype is idiopathic; some case reports suggest an association with other underlying diseases such as bronchogenic carcinoma, post-radiation pulmonary fibrosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and granulomatosis with polyangiitis.\(^4\)

Patients with the first subtype tend to be younger (20–40 years), while non-asthmatic patients tend to be older (30–70 years). In our case, atopy was the only co-morbidity.\(^4\) Corticosteroids are effective mainly in patients with asthma and atopy.\(^3,4\) Corticosteroid therapy was effective in our patient, and resolved all symptoms.

In conclusion, bronchocentric granulomatosis caused by Aspergillus tracheobronchitis should be considered in immunocompetent patients with tracheobronchial infiltrates on CT scan who do not respond to inhaled steroids or broad-spectrum antibiotics. Our patient yielded negative cultures and normal galactomannan values, but tracheal involvement was suggestive of Aspergillosis tracheobronchitis, and hyphae without tissue or vascular invasion were identified in a biopsy. Therefore, recovery of fungal hyphae in a biopsy specimen from an immunocompetent patient with atypical respiratory symptoms and CT findings should not be dismissed as contamination.

**References**


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**Pulmonary Thromboembolism as a First Manifestation of Atrial Myxoma**

**Tromboembolismo pulmonar como primera manifestación de un mixoma auricular**

*To the Editor,*

Atrial myxomas are the most common benign primary cardiac tumors. They occur preferentially in the left atrium and clinical manifestations can be varied, with asthma, anorexia, and weight loss due to intracavitary flow obstruction in the mitral valve and systemic embolisms; however, only exceptionally do they cause pulmonary thrombosis.\(^1–3\)

A 47-year-old woman, smoker of 20 pack-years, with no other history of interest, was admitted to the respiratory medicine department with a 4-month history of dyspnea on moderate exertion, general malaise, asthenia, right pleuritic pain, and polyarthralgia. She had also had fever and mild hemoptysis in the previous 4 days. Physical examination showed basal oxygen saturation 94%, heart rate 103 bpm, BP 107/73 mmHg, with signs of pleural effusion on auscultation. Of note on clinical laboratory tests were elevated CRP (95.7 mg/l) and 18 500 leukocytes/mm\(^3\) with neutrophilia. Chest X-ray showed consolidation in the left lower lobe with associated pleural effusion. Blood cultures, sputum microbiology, and antigen detection in urine were negative for pneumococcus and Legionella. Diagnostic thoracentesis was performed and was compatible with uncomplicated neutrophilic exudate. Cytology for malignant cells and microbiological cultures were negative. Despite starting empirical wide-spectrum antibiotic treatment, the patient’s clinical, hemodynamic, and radiological situations worsened, with increased work of breathing, tendency to hypotension, and mildly altered level of consciousness. An angio-CT was performed, which revealed bilateral pulmonary thromboembolism (PTE), a filling defect in the left atrium, and multiple bilateral opacities consistent with pulmonary infaracts. Eco-Doppler of the lower limbs ruled out deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

On echocardiography, a large mass was observed in the left atrium (6.3x3.2 cm) that protruded in diastole toward the left ventricle, obstructing the outflow. Signs of severe pulmonary hypertension were also seen, with pulmonary artery systolic pressure 85 mmHg, and estimated left ventricular ejection fraction 60% (Fig. 1).

In view of the severity of the clinical picture and hemodynamic instability, the patient was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. She subsequently worsened significantly, and the cardiovascular surgery department was contacted for removal of the intracardiac tumor. The pathology report of the surgical specimen confirmed a diagnosis of atrial myxoma. After surgery and anticoagulant treatment, clinical progress was very satisfactory; in a follow-up echocardiography, the pulmonary hypertension had resolved and the pulmonary angio-CT showed resolution of the intravascular

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clots. A thrombophilia study was also requested, and the patient was found to be a heterozygous carrier of the factor V Leiden mutation.

A myxoma is a benign cardiac tumor; however, its benign nature is relative, since it sometimes produces distant metastases and paraneoplastic syndromes caused by cytokines and growth factors produced by the tumor. Clinical presentation depends on size and location, and it can cause intracardiac flow obstruction, stenosis, and mitral regurgitation in the left cavities. Echocardiography is the diagnostic test of choice, and the curative treatment is surgical resection. Being a carrier of factor V Leiden mutation is not in itself an independent risk factor for the development of PTE, but rather an additional factor along with others that confer moderate or high risk.

The presence of systemic embolisms has been frequently noted in reviews of atrial myxoma. Our case is exceptional in that the myxoma manifested as PTE without associated DVT. We believe that this may be the consequence of various concomitant risk factors: hypercoagulability derived from the myxoma, thrombophilia, concomitant infection, and obstruction of the blood flow by the tumor which may promote the presence of “in situ” thrombi in the pulmonary circulation.

References


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