A 45-year-old male presented with 2 days of nausea, sweating, and abdominal pain. Examination revealed tachycardia, hypertension, diaphoresis, widespread crepitations, and diffuse abdominal tenderness. Profound hypotension developed, despite intravenous fluids, and was treated with noradrenaline and dobutamine; hypoxia required endotracheal intubation, followed by chest radiograph, which demonstrated extensive pulmonary edema. Echocardiography revealed severe global left ventricular systolic impairment, with an estimated ejection fraction of only 10% (Data Supplement Movies I and II). The patient was transferred to our hospital for the consideration of intraaortic balloon counterpulsation or left ventricular assist device support or both. An intraaortic balloon pump was inserted, and inotropic support was changed to adrenaline with modest improvement. Support was maintained with an estimated ejection fraction of 40% (Data Supplement Movies III and IV). Urine analysis collected preoperatively showed markedly elevated normetadrenaline and metadrenaline levels. The patient subsequently confirmed a history of several months of severe headaches lasting 5 minutes, along with intermittent palpitations, and the feeling his head was going to explode, which usually occurred when bending over to lace his boots in the morning. Histology of the tumor confirmed a paraganglioma with extensive ischemic necrosis.

Discussion

Phaeochromocytoma are rare catecholamine-producing tumors, typically presenting with headache, sweating, palpitation, and hypertension. Eighty-five percent arise from the adrenals, and when they arise outside the adrenals, they are termed paragangliomas. Recognized cardiovascular complications include sudden death, myocardial infarction, heart failure, hypertensive encephalopathy, and cardiogenic shock1 including fatal cardiomyopathy.2 The mechanism underlying the impaired ventricular function is unclear and may be because of a tachycardia-related cardiomyopathy, ventricular hypertrophy as a result of systemic hypertension, or a direct effect of catecholamines on cardiac myocytes. Following diagnosis, the challenge is to stabilize the patient with autonomic blockade to allow safe surgical removal of the tumor. Given the presenting symptom of abdominal pain with hypertension and diaphoresis on arrival followed by cardiogenic shock, it is likely that the acute event was infarction of part of the phaeochromocytoma, as suggested on histology with a surge in catecholamine levels and acute left ventricular stunning.

Phaeochromocytoma should be considered in patients presenting with heart failure and cardiogenic shock and no other obvious diagnosis.3 Removal of the tumor may lead to rapid reversal of catecholamine-induced cardiomyopathy. Extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation or left ventricular assist...
devices have been used to support surgery. We report the use of cardiopulmonary bypass to facilitate surgical removal in a critically ill patient with severe cardiac dysfunction.

Disclosures
None.

References

Figure 1. Computed tomography of the abdomen showing a mass overlying and compressing a left-sided inferior vena cava measuring 7.8 cm in diameter. An artifact from the intraaortic balloon pump in the aorta was noted.
Figure 2. Operative specimen.
What a Headache: Rare Neuroendocrine Indication for Cardiopulmonary Bypass for Severe Left Ventricular Dysfunction and Shock
James D. Newton, Shahzad Munir, Ravinay Bhindi and Oliver Ormerod

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