Harlequin syndrome in spontaneous dissection of the cervical carotid artery

Figure 1 Axial fat saturated T1-weighted MRI showing a hyperintense wall hematoma (arrows) surrounding the left cervical internal carotid artery

Figure 2 Photograph taken after the patient jogged, showing pale left forehead and nose, and right forehead and nose flush with the same intensity as both cheeks

A 52-year-old previously healthy man had a spontaneous dissection of the left cervical carotid artery (figure 1) with Horner syndrome. Three months later, when the patient restarted his running training, he noticed the symptoms of Harlequin syndrome (figure 2), which consist of unilateral facial flushing and sweating.¹ The Harlequin syndrome affected only the left part of the patient's face and nose, because vasomotor and sudomotor sympathetic fibers traveling along the internal carotid artery innervate just the forehead and nose. This patient shows that physicians should also consider spontaneous carotid dissection as possible etiology of Harlequin syndrome.

Hakan Sarikaya, MD, Dimitrios Georgiadis, MD, Ralf W. Baumgartner, MD, Zürich, Switzerland

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Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. Ralf W. Baumgartner, Department of Neurology, University Hospital, Frauenklinikstrasse 26, CH-8091 Zürich, Switzerland; ralf.baumgartner@usz.ch

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