Teaching NeuroImage: Rapidly Changing Symptoms with Multistep Migration of Clot in the Posterior Circulation Following Tenecteplase for Acute Ischemic Stroke

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Figure Count:
2

Table Count:
0

Search Terms:

Neurology® Published Ahead of Print articles have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication. This manuscript will be published in its final form after copyediting, page composition, and review of proofs. Errors that could affect the content may be corrected during these processes.

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Acknowledgment:

Study Funding:
The authors report no targeted funding.

Disclosure:
The authors report no relevant disclosures.

Preprint DOI:

Received Date:
2023-03-29

Accepted Date:
2023-09-20

Handling Editor Statement:
Submitted and externally peer reviewed. The handling editor was Resident and Fellow Deputy Editor Ariel Lyons-Warren, MD, PhD.
Case:

A 70-year-old man presented with acute vertigo and ataxia. CT-angiogram revealed left V3 segment vertebral artery occlusion (Figure 1A-B). He received Tenecteplase (0.25mg/kg IV bolus) and was transferred to our comprehensive stroke center due to risk of early neurological deterioration from clot migration that would necessitate thrombectomy. Repeat CTA revealed migration to V4 segment with PICA re-opacification and improving symptoms (Figure 1C-D). Two hours post-Tenecteplase, he developed aphasia, right hemianopia and sensorimotor symptoms (NIHSS 15). Angiogram showed a left P1 PCA thrombus. Attempted thrombectomy resulted in further migration to P2. MRI demonstrated multiple infarcts (Figure 2), representing stepwise ischemia from dynamic clot movement. Clot reformation from hypercoagulability or re-embolization seemed unlikely given short time course and exclusive posterior circulation involvement.

Clot migration is frequent in anterior circulation post-thrombolysis and may be more common after Tenecteplase.1,2 Thrombolysis in posterior circulation strokes similarly requires close observation for neurologic deterioration which may warrant further management with thrombectomy.2
References:


Figure 1. **CTA and angiogram timestamped images.** Initial V3 occlusion (A) with patent V4 (B). Post-tenecteplase V3 recanalization (C) with V4 occlusion to basilar artery (D) and PICA re-opacification (E). Later thrombus migration to P1 (F). Post-thrombectomy embolization to P2 (G).

Figure 2. **Diffusion-weighted axial MRI images.** Left lateral medullary (A) and cerebellar (B) infarcts from VA occlusion. Thalamic (C) and temporo-occipital (D) infarcts from PCA occlusion.
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Katrina Hannah D Ignacio, Diana J Kim, Johnston T Te, Jr., et al.
Neurology published online October 12, 2023
DOI 10.1212/WNL.0000000000207969

This information is current as of October 12, 2023

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