

Dear Sir,

Sudden Death from Ruptured Berry Aneurysms in a 55 Year-Old Man

An intracranial berry aneurysm, also known as a saccular aneurysm, is a sac – like out pouching in a cerebral blood vessels, which seem to be berry-shaped, hence the name. This type of aneurysm usually resides on the circle of Willis, where the main cerebral arteries bifurcates and link together¹. They are often located at or near the bifurcation of arteries.

A few of the aneurysms are giant type which presents in form of fusiform and saccular. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate these two morphologically. In general, the saccular type most often occurs at the arterial bifurcation as a result of hemodynamic stresses. On the other hand, the fusiform or dissection type may result from arteriosclerosis, congenital arteriopathy or traumatic dissection³⁻⁶. Hypertension, tobacco use, gender, and age, are some of the other factors known to predispose to formation of aneurysm^{7,8}.

Case Report

A senior civil servant who had been under some emotional/psychological problem following non- payment of accumulated salaries for upward of six months by his state government. He was said to have left office that fateful day; however, he did not make to his home. He had called a friend earlier on that fateful day informing him, he was tired and was having a feeling of inability to move the right upper limb and lower limb freely. The following day a search team of police and relatives found the lifeless body on the road. He was rushed to the emergency room at our centre and was

certified dead. The Police thereafter ordered a full investigation with detailed autopsy.

Autopsy Findings: The external examination of the patient showed right facial Nerve palsy. There was no sign of physical trauma, gunshot wound or stab wound. Internal examination showed ruptured berry aneurysms with blood collection over the brain in the subarachnoid space. There was also evidence of hypertensive heart disease and arteriosclerosis of the abdominal aorta.

Discussion

The patient died from hemorrhagic stroke from ruptured berry aneurysms precipitated mostly likely by severe hypertension. The complaint of weakness in the right upper and lower limbs, and the autopsy finding supports this assertion. The patient died from ruptured berry aneurysms. The age of the patient also supports the diagnosis as aneurysms and stroke is more common in old age.

The heart finding on autopsy showed that he had evidence of hypertensive damage to the heart. The patient may or may not have been aware that he was a hypertensive before he died. Acute rises in blood pressure or cerebral blood flow is known to cause rupture of the cerebral vessels¹⁰⁻¹². This is the most likely scenario in this patient.

The reason for this case report is to highlight ruptured berry aneurysm as a cause of sudden death.

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