

Images in cardiovascular medicine

Echinococcosis of the heart: echocardiographic features in a child

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Cardiac hydatid cyst is a rare condition representing approximately 1% of all sites of hydatidosis. The most common cardiac location of the cysts is the left ventricle (50%), whereas the interventricular septum, the atria, the right ventricle, and the pericardium are rarely involved.

Symptoms include atypical chest pain, dyspnea and palpitations¹⁻³.

A 4-year-old child was admitted to the department of pediatrics for persistent fever (38°C) lasting 2 weeks. Clinical examination revealed a systolic apical murmur (3/6).

Transthoracic echocardiography showed an anechoic spherical mass (3 × 3.4 cm) in the basal and middle ventricular septum (Fig. 1), without left ventricular outflow tract obstruction on Doppler examination. An abdominal computed tomographic scan revealed the presence of a cystic mass in the liver. Serum tests for echinococcosis were positive (1:200).

The cardiac cyst was surgically removed and analysis of the specimen confirmed the diagnosis of echinococcosis.

The postoperative course was uneventful. Because of the liver involvement, the patient was treated with albendazole.

At 1 year clinical and echocardiographic follow-up did not reveal any abnormal finding.

References

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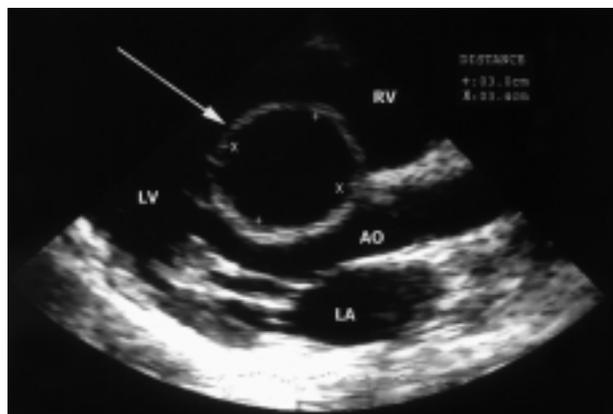


Figure 1. Transthoracic echocardiographic examination (parasternal long-axis view) showing a spherical mass (arrow) within the medium-basal interventricular septum. AO = aorta; LA = left atrium; LV = left ventricle; RV = right ventricle.