

Cardioembolic ischemic stroke

Cardioembolic ischemic stroke refers to a type of stroke caused by a blood clot that forms in the heart (usually in the atria) and then travels to the brain, blocking a blood vessel and leading to a lack of blood flow and oxygen to brain tissue. These clots can develop in the heart due to conditions such as atrial fibrillation (an irregular heart rhythm), heart valve disease (such as mitral valve stenosis or artificial heart valves), infective endocarditis, or cardiomyopathy.

The clot formed in the heart can break loose and travel through the bloodstream until it becomes lodged in a smaller artery in the brain, causing an ischemic stroke. This type of stroke typically occurs suddenly and may result in severe neurological deficits.

Symptoms of a cardioembolic ischemic stroke are similar to those of other types of strokes and may include sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm, or leg, typically on one side of the body, difficulty speaking or understanding speech, vision problems, severe headache, and loss of balance or coordination.

Treatment for cardioembolic ischemic stroke often involves the administration of clot-busting medications such as tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) to dissolve the clot and restore blood flow to the affected area of the brain. In some cases, mechanical thrombectomy may be performed to physically remove the clot from the blocked artery. Anticoagulant medications, such as warfarin or direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs), may also be prescribed to prevent future clot formation in patients with atrial fibrillation or other high-risk cardiac conditions.

Management of cardioembolic stroke may also include addressing underlying heart conditions through medications, procedures (such as catheter ablation for atrial fibrillation), or surgery to reduce the risk of recurrent stroke. Rehabilitation therapy may be necessary to help patients regain lost function and improve their quality of life after a stroke. Early recognition, prompt medical intervention, and ongoing management of cardiac conditions are crucial for preventing recurrent cardioembolic strokes and optimizing long-term outcomes.

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