Primary cardiac tumors: Rare but important

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In this month's issue of the *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*, Sánchez-Enrique and associates¹ present a case of a large right atrial hemangioma that was found incidentally in a 74-year-old symptom-free man and successfully resected. Hemangiomas are uncommon cardiac tumors that are found in the right atrium in about 26% of cases. An independent predictor of hemangioma-related preoperative death is tumor location along the interatrial or interventricular septum. Although radiotherapy, corticosteroids, and β -receptor-blocking agents have been successful in the conservative management of these patients, surgical resection is generally indicated because of the high incidence of severe complications, including embolism, cavitory obstruction, and coronary steal.² It is remarkable that even though the tumor had occupied most of the right atrial cavity, there was no evidence of hemodynamic obstruction and the patient was symptom free. Clear intraoperative, echocardiographic, angiographic, and magnetic resonance images are provided to show the anatomy of the tumor, its blood supply originating from the right coronary artery, and the heterogeneous morphology of the tumor. Detailed gross and histologic images show that this particular tumor possessed qualities of all 3 classifications of hemangioma: cavernous, capillary, and arteriovenous.

Primary cardiac tumors are rare and often serendipitously discovered in the absence of symptoms. A careful evaluation

of the tumor must be undertaken for a full understanding of the anatomy and the feasibility of resection. In general, it is not possible to overstudy these patients, because any and all pieces of information could prove useful. Sánchez-Enrique and associates¹ completed their preoperative work-up in comprehensive fashion, permitting surgical resection with a high probability of success.

References

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Central Message

Primary cardiac tumors are potentially dangerous conditions. Careful preoperative planning is essential for successful resection.

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