Reviewer's report

Title: Intramural Haematoma of the Thoracic Aorta: an emergency for the Cardiac Surgeon.

Version: 1 Date: 4 August 2009

Reviewer: Harry Parissis

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Comments to the Authors

This is a valuable review regarding the management of an important entity: intramural hematoma (IMH) of the thoracic aorta. The paper attempts to answer the question as to which is the optimal treatment strategy for IMH of the aorta. It supports the notion that intramural hematoma of the ascending aorta should be treated with surgery.

Could the authors elaborate:

1) What is the incidence of IMH in patients with atherosclerotic aorta
2) When the diagnosis of IMH is being made how often atherosclerosis is a concomitant feature?
3) What is the correlation between IMH and aortic diameter or with other words what is the relationship between IMH and aneurysms of the aorta
4) Are there any randomized control trials ie. Medical Vs surgical therapy ..looking into the outcome of IMH
5) IRAD study : out of 1010 patients with acute aortic dissection, 58 (5.7%) of them had IMH. How many patients with IMH go on to develop dissections?
6) “5 year survival of IMH is < 50%”: Could you please put a reference in this statement
7) The strengths and weaknesses of the review have to be stated. The level of evidence of the authors conclusions have to be stated. The “cut off” number of aortic dilation more than 5cm in the algorithm needs to be justified.

In my opinion this review is valuable and should be accepted after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

No