Reviewer's report

Title: Esophageal cancer presenting with atrial fibrillation: a case report

Version: 2 Date: 29 April 2008

Reviewer: SANJAY GHOTKAR

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 9 criteria for evaluation in the journal: Unexpected or unusual presentations of a disease

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: No

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: No

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

This is well written case report highlighting the possibility of an occurrence of atrial arrhythmia secondary to compression of left atrium by a malignant oesophageal tumour. The patient reported in the report has been hypertensive over 5 years. Even though no structural abnormality of heart was detected on performing transthoracic echocardiographic examination the EKG had shown evidence of left ventricular hypertrophy. In the introduction part of their report the authors acknowledge that hypertension is one of the common condition associated with atrial fibrillation. Thus, there are confounding factors as to the exact cause of this transient episode of atrial fibrillation. Whereas direct mechanical compression of the left atrium may have precipitated AF in this case, the authors need to be more clear in their report that presence of hypertensive heart disease may also have contributed to occurrence of this transient atrial arrhythmia. It will also be useful if authors could report the serum potassium level when patient developed the arrhythmia in addition to results of the other blood tests.
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests