Increased Occurrence of Pericardial Effusion in Patients with Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease.

Qi Qian, Robert P Hartman, Bernard F King, Vicente E Torres

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD) is a common hereditary disease with prominent connective tissue manifestations. A frequent occurrence of asymptomatic pericardial effusion has been observed in patients with ADPKD.

DESIGN, SETTING, PARTICIPANTS, & MEASUREMENTS: Consecutive computed tomography scans from 60 patients with ADPKD (group 1), 100 patients without ADPKD and with serum creatinine concentration of >1.1 mg/dl (group 2), and 100 potential kidney donors (group 3) were retrospectively examined. Pericardial effusion was graded from 0 to 4 on the basis of the distance between the parietal and visceral pericardia at mid, mid-low, and low levels of the heart on transaxial computed tomography scan sections. RESULTS: Twenty-one (35%) of 60 patients in group 1 but none of the patients in groups 2 and 3 had moderate to high effusion scores. The presence and severity of pericardial effusion were not associated with age, renal dysfunction, or hypertension. All pericardial effusions were asymptomatic. CONCLUSIONS: Pericardial effusion occurs with an increased frequency in patients with ADPKD, possibly as a result of increased compliance of the parietal pericardium. Although frequently moderate to large, these effusions are generally well tolerated and clinically inconsequential.

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Qi Qian, Hui Du, Bernard F King, Sumedha Kumar, Patrick G Dean, Fernando Gcosio, Vicente E Torres

*Division of Nephrology and Hypertension, Department of Physiology and Biomedical Engineering, Department of Ophthalmology, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Mayo Graduate School, Rochester, Minnesota.

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[1] Department of Internal Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine, P.O. Box 208029, 333 Cedar Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8029, USA. [2] Present address: Genome Institute of Singapore, 60 Biopolis Street, 138672, Singapore.

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