Acute myocardial infarction in young adults

In the excellent case report and review by Osula et al, concerning acute myocardial infarction in young adults, comment was passed on the probable mechanism of the actual myocardial infarct described, and other possible causes were reviewed.1

The point made that the diagnosis of spontaneous coronary artery dissection is often made at postmortem is accepted. However in spontaneous coronary artery dissection, has been linked to both immunosuppression and spontaneous coronary artery dissection is often reviewed.

It is also clear that thrombolytic therapy in spontaneous coronary artery dissection is potentially a “double edged sword”. Authors report, in the deterioration of patients after treatment with thrombolytics have suggested that thrombolytic induced bleeding into the dissected vessel wall is the probable cause of the clinical deterioration.2,3 Osula et al do suggest that diagnostic coronary angiography be performed in all cases but do not specify timing.

Early recognition of coronary artery angiographic abnormalities, including spontaneous dissection, is surely essential in the management of young patients with acute myocardial infarction. While recognising that the coronary arteries in this case were subsequently shown to be “normal”, it could be argued that direct coronary angiography should precede (and potentially negate the need for) thrombolytic therapy in young patients with myocardial infarction.

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References

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The differential diagnosis of coronary embolism, acknowledged to be relevant to the aetiopathogenesis of myocardial infarction in the young,1 would be incomplete without mention of paradoxical coronary embolism, especially in the context of a diagnosis of nephrotic syndrome. As the authors themselves pointed out, severe hypoalbuminaemia is a risk factor for venous thrombosis, and the latter may, in turn, be complicated by embolic manifestations involving either the pulmonary or the systemic vascular bed. The latter, aptly entitled “paradoxical” embolism, may be more difficult to recognise when it occurs in the absence of concurrent pulmonary embolism, as in the 66 year old with patent foramen ovale, reported by Wiecking in 1971.2 In the 24 year old reported by Jungbluth et al, the communication between the cardiac chambers was an atrial septal defect.3 According to the literature review undertaken by these authors, it is the association of pulmonary embolism (giving rise to an increase in right atrial pressure), and an interatrial communication which most commonly provides the pathophysiological “substrate” for this syndrome.4 Diagnostic difficulty may, however, be compounded by the fact that, even in the presence of clinically overt deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism may, itself, be subclinical,5 with the possibility that the only clinically manifest embolic episode may be the one involving the coronary circulation.

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References
limited assessment of efficacy, particularly in comparison to other approaches. I found the three chapters on the economics of epilepsy an excellent introduction to this field with clear explanations of the economic concepts and research methodology involved.

Most readers will probably find this book of limited interest. This is perhaps inevitable for a collection of presentations from a conference, particularly where the subject is so broad in scope and must draw from many disciplines. It may, however, have been useful to include a more substantial section drawing together the different strands of the comprehensive approach.

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DIARY

The Cell Biology of Reproduction
4–6 July 2002 (registration 3 July), St John's College, Cambridge, UK. The programme is aimed at scientists and clinicians with research interests and seeks to take understanding of the basic cellular biology of reproduction in the placenta, endometrium, and ovary and to translate this through into clinical problems. For further information contact the Congress Secretariat, PO Box 3219 Barnes, London SW13 9XR, UK (tel: +44 (0)20 8741 1311, fax: +44 (0)20 8741 0611, email: meetings@obgyn.cam.ac.uk).

Techniques and Applications of Molecular Biology: A Course for Medical Practitioners
8–11 July 2002, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. A four day residential course for those in the medical profession wishing to improve their understanding of the principles and applications of genetic engineering techniques. For further information contact Dr Charlotte Moonan, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK (tel: +44 (0)2476 523540, fax: +44 (0)2476 523701, email: Charlotte.Moonan@warwick.ac.uk).

An Introduction to Bioinformatics: A Practical Approach
2–3 September 2002, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. A two day course for those wishing to gain a practical understanding of the applications of bioinformatics. For further information contact Dr Charlotte Moonan, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK (tel: +44 (0)2476 523540, fax: +44 (0)2476 523701, email: Charlotte.Moonan@warwick.ac.uk).

Professional Updating in Epidemiology. Design of Vaccination Programmes: From Sero-Epidemiology to Cost-Effectiveness
8–12 July 2002, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. The course intends to develop understanding of the epidemiological principles of vaccine programme design, including serological surveys, parameter estimation, transmission dynamic models, and cost-effective analysis of different programmes. For further information contact Dr Stephen Hicks, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK (tel: +44 (0)2476 523540, fax: +44 (0)2476 523701, email: s.j.hicks@warwick.ac.uk).

Falk Symposium: GI Inflammation and Disturbed Gut Function: The Challenge of New Concepts
4–6 October 2002, Freiburg, Germany.

Falk Symposium: Targets for Treatment of IBD
6–8 October 2002, Freiburg, Germany.

Falk Symposium: Disease Progression and Carcinogenesis in the Gastrointestinal Tract
9–10 October 2002, Freiburg, Germany. For further information on the above contact the Falk Foundation eV, Congress Division, Leineweberstr 5, PO Box 6259, D-79041 Freiburg, Germany (tel: +49 761 15140, fax: +49 761 1514359, email: symposia@falkfoundation.de).

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