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Editorial Comment

The Problem of Orphan Procedures: Comment on “Sudden Cardiac Death Complicating Alcohol Septal Ablation: A Case Report and Review of Literature”

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In this issue of *CCI*, there is an interesting case report by Antoun, El Masry, and Breall on ventricular fibrillation occurring an hour after an alcohol septal ablation procedure. The authors provide a good review of some of the complications associated with this procedure to treat hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

Unlike several other cardiology journals, this journal has had a long-standing policy of publishing case reports, because these reports are useful to highlight particular problems and help us to think in new, innovative ways. Thus it is with this case report. Not only

is the individual recognition of postprocedure arrhythmias important to consider for my clinical practice, but also this publication brings up the issue of the problems we face in trying to determine the optimal treatment for patients with hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy.

Unfortunately, there is no monetary gain in the process of determining which one of the several techniques might be better for treatment of this condition. There will probably never be a randomized trial of surgical myomectomy versus alcohol septal ablation. Unless a new device is developed by some company which is willing to risk its venture capital funds, a randomized clinical trial is just too expensive to entertain. The NIH and the American Heart Association have too many other priorities and the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association lacks the necessary political power to force the allocation of funds.

So we are left with observational reports of large or small series (and case reports) to help educate us in the potential benefits and possible complications associated with these procedures. Unfortunately, this is the case with many scientific questions in medicine. I appreciate the fact that we have this journal that can provide a vehicle for our edification.

Conflict of interest: Nothing to report.

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