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Ophthalmoplegia with Contralateral Hemiplegia. Occlusion of the Internal Carotid Artery Due to Thrombosis of an Intracavernous Aneurysm

J.C. GAUTIER, M.D., A. AWADA, M.D., AND A. MAJDALANI, M.D.

SUMMARY A left ophthalmoplegia and right hemiplegia were due to thrombosis of an intracavernous aneurysm with occlusion of the left internal carotid artery. Ophthalmoplegia with contralateral hemiplegia is probably a rare syndrome. Thrombosis of an intracavernous aneurysm is probably a rare cause of occlusion of the internal carotid artery.

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OCCLUSIVE THROMBOSIS of the internal carotid artery (ICA) secondary to thrombosis in an aneurysm of the intracavernous ICA (ICICA) is probably very rare. It is not mentioned in current textbooks.¹⁻³ We report one such case with a distinct clinical picture namely ipsilateral complete ophthalmoplegia with contralateral hemiplegia.

Case Report

A 65 year-old right handed woman was found at home seated on a chair with a right-sided weakness and speech disorder. She was admitted 24 hours later, on June 30, 1985.

She was alert with a right hemiplegia and aphasia. There were no gross sensory or visual field defect. She had a left ptosis and complete extrinsic and intrinsic

paralysis of the left eye. There was no proptosis or chemosis. No bruit was heard over the neck and eyeballs. Cardiac examination was without significant abnormalities. BP:160/80.

Unenhanced CT scan 1 hour after admission showed a left prerolandic low density area and a high density area in the left cavernous sinus region. On the same day angiography showed occlusion of the left ICA approximately 3 cms after its origin (fig. 1). A second CT with contrast and slices 6 mms thick showed a rounded image highly suggestive of a thrombosed large (23 mms diameter) aneurysm of the left ICICA (fig. 2). There was in addition erosion of the anterior clinoid process and of the lateral wall of the ethmoidal sinus (fig. 1 and 2). On July 4, a right carotid angiography showed 2 small berry aneurysms, at the bifurcation respectively of the right ICA and right middle cerebral artery.

The hemiparesis partially improved. The ophthalmoplegia was still complete when the patient was discharged to a Rehabilitation Unit on August 5, 1985.

From the Department of Service d'Urgences Cerebrovasculaires, La Salpêtrière, 75013 Paris, France.

Address correspondence to: Professor J.C. Gautier, Service d'Urgences Cerebrovasculaires, La Salpêtrière, 75013 Paris, France.

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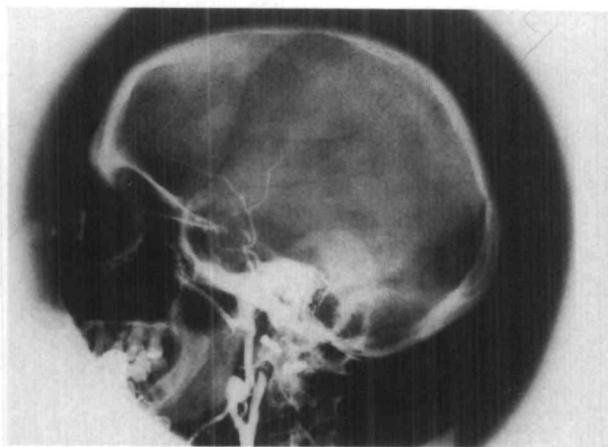


FIGURE 1. Occlusion of the left ICA 3 cms beyond its origin.



FIGURE 2. CT with contrast medium. Large thrombosed intracavernous aneurysm. Target image. Erosion of the anterior clinoid process and lateral wall of the ethmoidal sinus. G: left.

Discussion

The aneurysm in this patient had a diameter of 2, 3 cms thus falling short of the definition of giant aneurysms (diameter higher than 2.5 cms).⁴ To our knowledge only 1 similar case of occlusion of the ICA has been reported (Whittle et al.⁵) As in our patient the proximal edge of the thrombus occluding the ICA was well beyond the ICA origin, suggesting retrograde thrombosis. Whittle et al in the same year reported a series of 12 patients with thrombosis of giant intracranial aneurysms (2 mentioned as 'carotid cavernous').⁶ It is not clear whether their case 4 is the same as that mentioned above. Nevertheless, in the reported cases, thrombosis of giant ICICA aneurysms resulted in ophthalmoplegia with proptosis and in one patient, facial dysesthesiae. In none of them was ipsilateral ophthalmoplegia with contralateral hemiplegia seen as in the patient reported here.

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