

Illustration

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Saddle Thrombus seen on Transthoracic Echo: A Rare Feature in Pulmonary Embolism

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The Saddle thrombus is a rare condition characterized by presence of a large thrombus which straddles the main pulmonary arterial trunk and its bifurcation leading to acute massive Pulmonary Embolism (PE). Its incidence among patients diagnosed with PE is approximately 2.6%.¹ Saddle PE frequently results in significant hemodynamic instability and signals the potential for imminent hemodynamic collapse. This is rarely seen on Trans-thoracic echocardiography (TTE). We recently came across a patient who presented with breathlessness following transatlantic air travel. His TTE (routine and 3D) revealed a saddle thrombus in the main pulmonary arterial trunk extending into its two main branches (Figures 1 and 2). A CT pulmonary angiogram confirmed the same (Figure 3). He was subsequently successfully thrombolized and made an uneventful recovery.

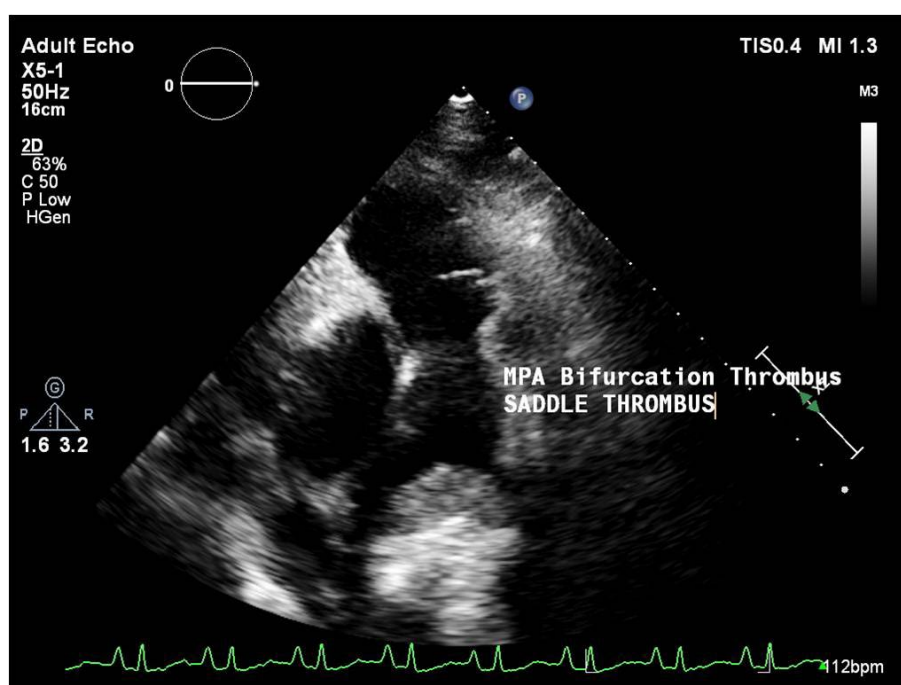


Figure 1: Echocardiographic Parasternal short axis view (PSAX) shows a saddle thrombus at the Main Pulmonary artery bifurcation extending into its two branches (marked by an arrow).

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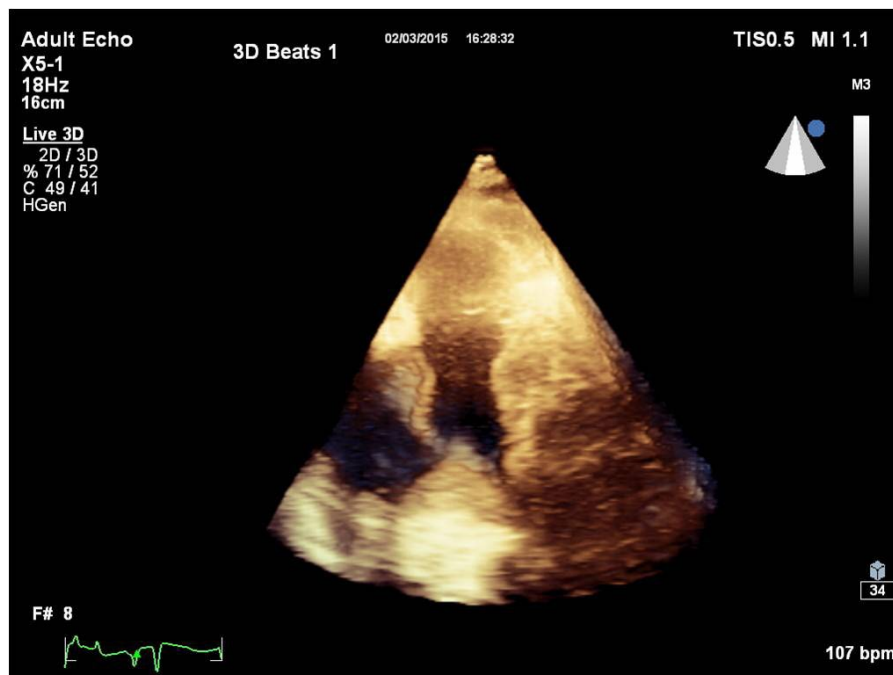


Figure 2: 3 dimensional Echocardiographic Parasternal short axis view (PSAX) shows a saddle thrombus at the Main Pulmonary artery bifurcation extending into its two branches.

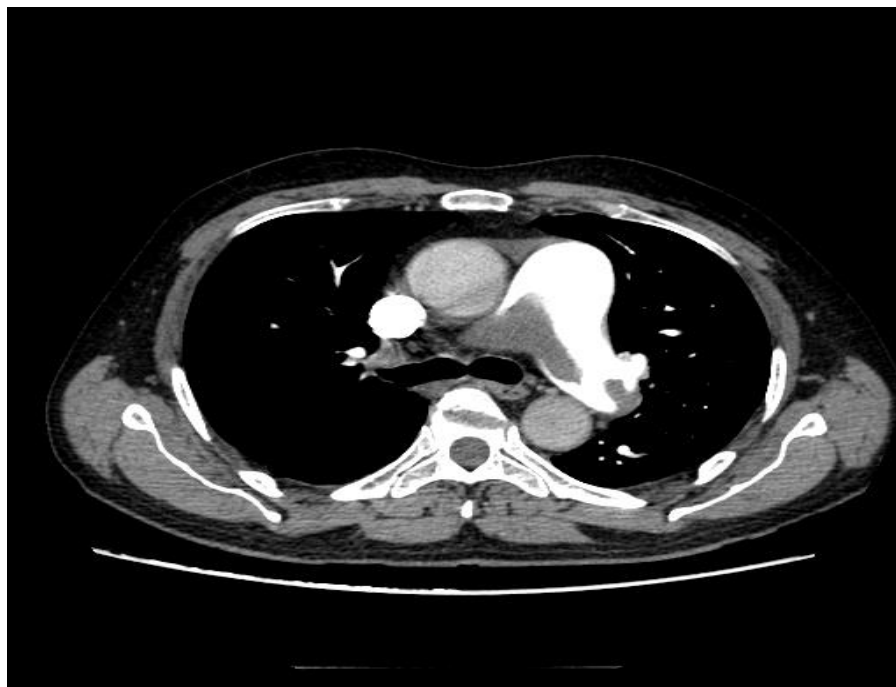


Figure 3: A CT pulmonary angiogram showing the saddle thrombus.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

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