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Acute aortic syndromes: What do we know?

Acute aortic dissection is a catastrophic event and has become increasingly recognized as forming part of a spectrum of acute aortic syndromes which include Intra-Mural Hematoma (IMH) and penetrating atherosclerotic ulcer. Conventional classifications of acute aortic dissection have focused on involvement or not of the ascending aorta in an attempt to differentiate those patients who may require emergency surgery (ascending aorta involved, type 'A') from those in whom surgery would only be required under specific circumstances (ascending aorta spared, type B). Traditionally, IMH of the aorta has been classified and treated in a similar way. It has become increasingly recognized that a sub-category of dissection, with retrograde dissection from the descending to ascending aorta is more common than previously thought and may require a different treatment strategy than currently accepted for ascending aortic involvement. This presentation will cover controversies in determining the etiology of components of the acute aortic syndromes and suggest traditional approaches need to be modified in light of a better understanding of pathophysiology and the emergence of endovascular treatments.

Biography

Professor Malcolm John Underwood has been a Consultant in Cardiothoracic Surgery for over 15 years and was appointed as Senior Lecturer/Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at the Bristol Heart Institute in 1999 and subsequently NHS Consultant in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary from 2002. Over the years, he has held several positions of responsibility including the Programme Director for Cardiothoracic Surgery and Chairman of the Specialist Training Committee in the United Kingdom (UK) South West Region; and Research and Development Leader for the United Bristol Healthcare Trust, UK. He was Audit Lead and subsequently Clinical Governance representative for Cardiac Surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, UK. In 2005 he was appointed as Head of Cardiac Surgery at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and in 2007 as Chief, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, CUHK, Prince of Wales Hospital, Hong Kong. At present, Professor Underwood is Chairman of Specialty Group in Cardiothoracic Surgery, Hong Kong, Chairman of the Cardiothoracic Board, and the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong and a Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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