

A Short Note on Pulmonary Embolism

Kosmas Saba*

Department of Vascular Surgery, Central Clinic of Athens, Athens, Greece

DESCRIPTION

Pulmonary embolism is a blood clot in the lung that occurs when a clot the body (frequently the leg or arm) moves through the bloodstream and becomes lodged in the blood vessels of the lung. This restricts blood flow to the lungs, brings down oxygen levels in the lungs and elevates blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries.

The risk of blood clots is increased by cancer, prolonged bed rest, smoking, stroke, certain hereditary conditions, estrogen-based medication, pregnancy, obesity, and after certain types of surgery. A little extent of cases are because of the embolization of air, fat or amniotic fluid. Diagnosis is based on signs and symptoms in combination with test results. If the risk is low, a blood test known as a D-dimer might preclude the condition. Otherwise, a CT pulmonary angiography, lung ventilation/perfusion scan, or ultrasound of the legs may confirm the diagnosis.

Efforts to prevent pulmonary embolism include starting to move as soon as possible after surgery, lower leg exercises during periods of sitting, and the utilization of blood thinners after certain types of surgery. Treatment is done with anticoagulants such as heparin, warfarin or one of the Direct-Acting Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs). These are suggested for at least three months. In severe cases it may require thrombolysis using medication such as Tissue Plasminogen Activator (TPA) which is given intravenously or through a catheter and some may require surgery (a pulmonary thrombectomy).

Anticoagulant medications, in several cases for the treatment of pulmonary embolism anti-coagulants are used which are also called as blood thinners. Anticoagulants decrease the blood's ability to clot and prevent future blood clots.

Signs and symptoms

- Shortness of breath, this symptom typically appears suddenly and always gets worse with exertion.

- Chest pain, it feels like having a heart attack. The aggravation is often sharp and felt breathe in deeply, often stopping you from being able to take a deep breath. It can likewise be felt when you cough, bend or stoop.
- The cough produces bloody or blood-streaked sputum.

Some more signs and symptoms that can occur with pulmonary embolism are listed below

- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Excessive sweating
- Fever
- Leg pain or swelling
- Discolored skin (cyanosis)
- Wheezing

Pulmonary embolism happens when a clump of material, most frequently a blood clot, gets wedged into an artery in lungs. These blood clots most commonly come from the deep veins of legs, a condition known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).

In many cases, multiple clots are associated in pulmonary embolism. The segments of lung served by each blocked artery are robbed of blood and may die. This is known as pulmonary infarction. This makes it more difficult for lungs to provide oxygen to the rest of body.

Treatment for pulmonary embolism is normally given in hospital, where the condition can be closely monitored. The length of treatment and hospital stay will vary, depending on the seriousness of the clot. Depending on medical condition, treatment options may vary which include anticoagulant (blood-thinner) medications, thrombolytic treatment, pressure stockings, and sometimes surgery or interventional procedures to develop blood stream and reduce the risk of future blood clots.

Correspondence to: Kosmas Saba, Department of Vascular Surgery, Central Clinic of Athens, Athens, Greece, E-mail: ksmsaba@hotmail.com

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