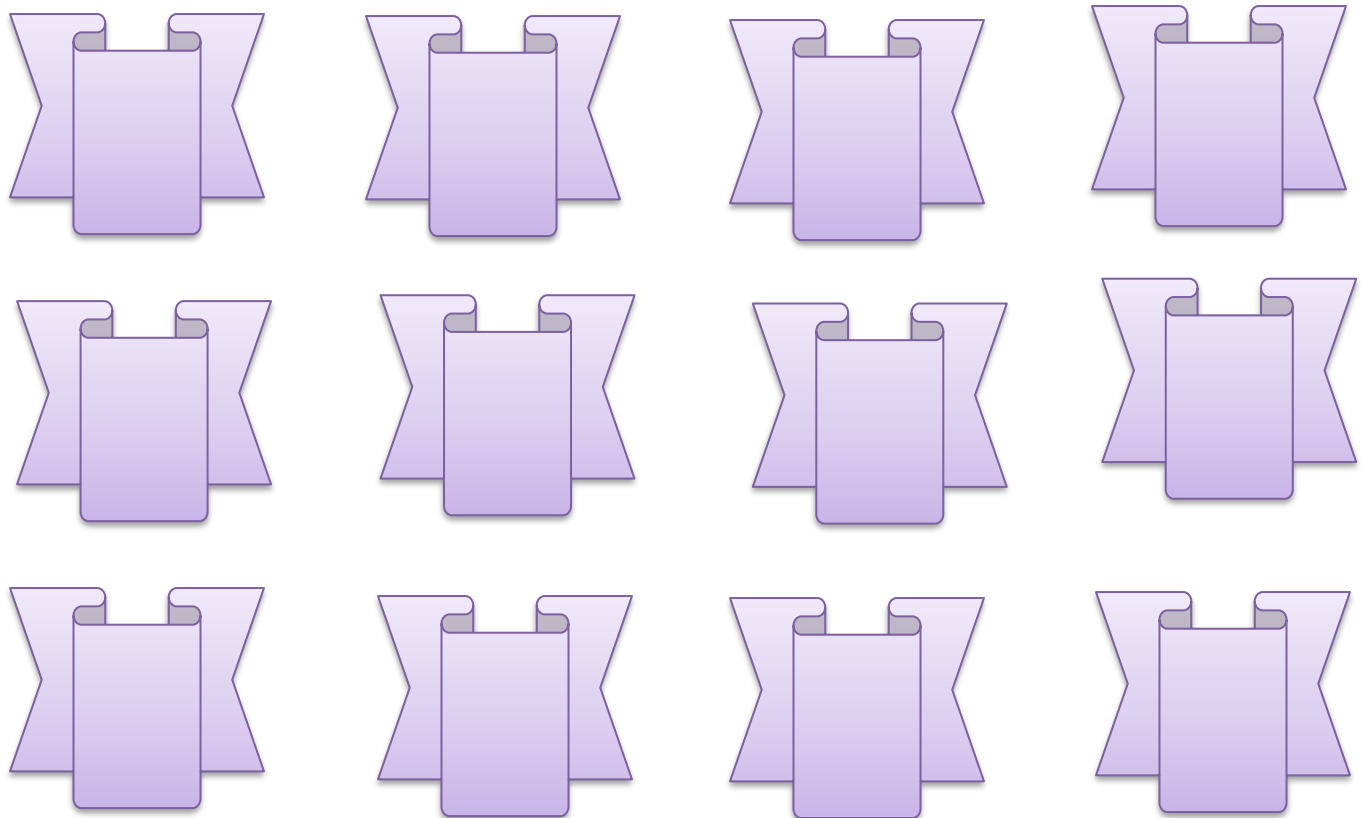


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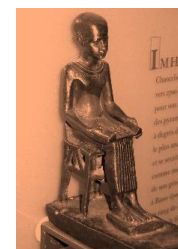


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Original Article

Assessment of Left Ventricular Systolic Function by Three-Dimensional Echocardiography Pre and Post Aortic Valve Replacement in Patient with Severe Aortic Stenosis

Elsayed M. Elsemelawy ^{*1}, Taher S. Abd El-kareem ^{1,2}, Mohye Eldin El-Abbady ¹, Mohammad I. Al-Deftar ¹

¹Department of Cardiology, Faculty of Medicine, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

²Department of Cardiology, Nizwa Hospital, Nizwa, Oman

ABSTRACT

Article information

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*Corresponding author

Email: elsayedabdelhady29@gmail.com

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Background: Despite left ventricle [LV] dysfunction, the aortic valve replacement risk for aortic stenosis [AS] was acceptable and related mainly to coronary artery disease and mean aortic gradient. The long-term survival was related to cardiac output and coronary disease.

The Aim of the work: To assess the potential role of three-dimensional [3D] speckle tracking echocardiography [STE] in the detection of systolic dysfunction of the LV in severe aortic stenosis pre- and post- valve replacement.

Patients and Methods: Forty patients with severe AS in the pre- and post-surgical valve replacement were enrolled and assigned as group A. Group [B] included [20] sex-and age-matched apparently healthy individuals as a control group.

Results: There was a statistically significant differences between groups on the 2D and 3D STE but the 2D STE was the most significant as regard the global longitudinal strain. After aortic valve replacement, basic echocardiographic parameters showed no significant differences after than before aortic valve replacement. However, there was a significant improvement of global longitudinal strain and global circumferential strain after than before surgery by 2D and 3D speckle tracking echocardiography.

Conclusion: The speckle tracking echocardiography 2D or 3D is an optional significant modality for detection of subclinical left ventricular dysfunction in patients with severe aortic stenosis and preserved EF.

Keywords: Echocardiography; Aortic Valve; Stenosis; Speckle Tracking; Three-dimensional.



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INTRODUCTION

Due to long-term pressure overload of the left ventricle [LV], patients with severe aortic stenosis [AS] develop LV enlargement and dysfunction^[1]. Patients with severe aortic stenosis or regurgitation may develop permanent myocardial dysfunction [e.g., LV heart failure], which increases the risk of sudden death. Aortic valve replacement [AVR] is an effective procedure that may minimize the risk of sudden death and improving LV cardiac function^[2].

Standard interventional techniques [e.g., cardiac catheterization and routine echocardiography], may underestimate the LV dysfunction, especially in patients with maintained ejection fraction [EF]. This hidden LV dysfunction in aortic stenosis/aortic regurgitation [AS/AR] has serious morbid and fatal consequences^[3].

Many recent investigations have shown that global myocardial strain has prognostic relevance. This may aid in better estimating the prognosis of such individuals by identifying mild LV dysfunction. In untreated patients, LV strain performance deteriorates over time, therefore recognizing mild myocardial failure at an early stage may have therapeutic significance^[4]. Due to inherent foreshortening inaccuracies and reliance on geometric models, two-dimensional [2D] echocardiography has limits in estimating LV volumes, ejection percentage, and LV mechanics^[5].

Three-dimensional [3D] speckle tracking echocardiography [STE] is an innovative method for the quantification of the cardiac deformation. STE is based on the monitoring of ultrasonic speckles in gray scale full-volume 3D pictures. Advances in ultrasound technologies have made 3D speckle tracking widely available^[6]. With the advancement of 3D echocardiography, repeatability and accuracy have improved. Data on the feasibility, accuracy, and clinical uses of 3D STE are fast becoming available. 3D STE derives numerous metrics from the tracking findings, including longitudinal, circumferential, and radial strains, as well as a combined assessment of longitudinal and circumferential strains, known as area strain^[7].

LV rotational movements such as rotation, twist, and torsion can also be quantified using 3D STE. It gives more information about global and localized cardiac deformation. The diagnosis of subclinical myocardial involvement in HF,

arterial hypertension, dyssynchrony, and ischemic heart disease are the main uses^[8].

The current work aimed to assess the role of 3D STE in the recognition of systolic dysfunction of the LV in severe aortic stenosis pre- and post- valve replacement.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

The present study included [40] patients [Group A] with severe aortic stenosis due to congenital, rheumatic or sclero-calcific aortic valve disease and [20] age- and sex-matched healthy individuals as a control group [Group B]. Echocardiography was performed at the Islamic center, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

We included patients with severe aortic stenosis pre- and post-surgical valve replacement. However, we excluded patient with other congenital heart diseases, significant mitral regurgitation and stenosis, previous cardiac surgical or percutaneous intervention, patients with conduction abnormalities, pacemaker, ongoing arrhythmia, documented ischemic heart diseases [IHD], poor echocardiographic window and patient refusal.

All patients with severe AS were subject to careful history taking, clinical examination [general and local cardiac examination] in a systematic manner. A resting standard 12-leads surface electrocardiogram was performed. Then, 2 D and 4 D echocardiography was performed as described elsewhere^[9,10].

Briefly, the standard echo-Doppler was performed using a 2.5 multifrequency 1.7- 4 MHz transducer [GE Vivid 95 Ultrasound Machine, GE HealthCare, USA] in the left lateral decubitus position. Images were registered in the standard views. Then, calculations were completed according to the American Society of Echocardiography recommendations. The B-mode assessed wall motion, valves, pericardial sac or any congenital heart diseases. The M-mode assessed left atrial and aortic root dimensions, and LV measurements [end diastolic diameter [LVEDd], left ventricular end systolic diameter [LVESd], Interventricular septum thickness [IVSd], and posterior wall thickness [LVPWT]], LV systolic function [ejection fraction and fractional shortening] and relative wall thickness. After that, a doppler study was performed for evaluation of the inflow at the mitral valve was recorded for the assessment of E/A ratio and evaluation of the left ventricular diastolic function, and any valve diseases. Finally, transmitral doppler inflow

and tissue pulsed wave doppler was performed to estimate the peak of early diastole relaxation velocity [Em] of the septal mitral annulus and the ratio of the transmitral peak early velocity [E] to Em [E/Em ratio] was calculated.

The 4-D volumetric transducer was used to acquire a full volume scan by harmonic imaging from an apical approach, using a frame rate higher than 40% of the heart rate to increase recognition of the "speckles" in successive frames. Data sets were stored digitally in raw data format and equipped with commercially available software [4D Auto LVQ software], for analysis of LV volumes, EF, LV mass, and 4D STE deformation parameters. By the reported approach, LV end-diastolic [EDV, mL] and LV end- systolic volume [ESV, mL] were calculated, and $EF\% = [EDV-ESV]/EDV \times 100$ and other measures were derived. All patients were assessed three months post-intervention.

Data analysis: The collected data was anonymized, fed to statistical package of social sciences [SPSS] package, version 25 [IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA]. Quantitative normally distributed data were presented by the arithmetic mean \pm SD [Standard deviation], while categorical data were presented by relative frequency and percentages [calculated from each group]. Comparison between the study and control groups was performed by independent samples "t" and Chi square tests according to type of data. P value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

In the study group, 52.5% were NYHA grade I, while 20.0%, 15.0% and 12.5% were

grades II, III and IV, respectively. Thus, NYHA class I was the most common among study subjects. The age, sex, BMI, and other medical history of the two groups did not show any significant difference [table 1].

There was no statistically significant difference in the basic echocardiographic parameters taken before and after aortic valve replacement [table 2].

Table [3] demonstrates a statistically significant presence of left ventricular subclinical dysfunction within the aortic stenosis group, specifically in relation to global longitudinal strain and global circumferential strain. This was observed through the use of 2D and 3D speckle tracking echocardiography before the aortic valve replacement.

Table [4] presents statistically significant findings for both 2D speckle tracking echocardiography [STE] and 3D STE, with 2D STE showing greater significance in terms of global longitudinal strain. Similarly, 2D STE exhibits higher significance than 3D STE regarding global circumferential strain.

Table [5] reveals that there is no statistically significant difference in basic echocardiographic parameters when comparing measurements before and after aortic valve replacement.

According to Table [6], there was a notable enhancement in global longitudinal strain and global circumferential strain observed through both 2D and 3D speckle tracking echocardiography following aortic valve replacement.

Table [1]: Patient personal and clinical characteristics among study groups

Variables		Study group	Control group	Test	P	
Demographic data	Age [years]	75.15 \pm 6.60	73.30 \pm 3.56	1.169	0.247	
	BMI [kg/m ²]	29.99 \pm 18.12	27.60 \pm 3.63	0.583	0.562	
	BSA [m ²]	1.99 \pm 0.17	2.01 \pm 0.11	0.485	0.629	
	Sex [n, %]	Male	27 [67.5%]	13 [65%]	0.038	0.846
		Female	13 [32.5%]	7 [35%]		
	Residence [n%]	Urban	21 [52.5%]	6 [30%]	2.727	0.099
Rural		19 [47.5%]	14 [70%]			
Medical history	Hypertension	18 [45%]	7 [35%]	0.549	0.459	
	Diabetes mellitus	14 [35%]	7 [35%]	0.001	1.0	
	Hepatitis	21 [52.5%]	11 [55%]	0.033	0.855	
	Dyslipidemia	24 [60%]	8 [40%]	2.143	0.148	
	Chronic kidney disease	18 [45%]	8 [40%]	0.136	0.713	
	COPD	12 [30.0%]	5[25.0%]	0.164	0.664	
	Smoking	8 [20%]	5 [25%]	0.196	0.658	
Blood pressure [mmHg]	Systolic	136.25 \pm 12.70	135.25 \pm 16.26	0.261	0.795	
	Diastolic	84.25 \pm 6.46	85.50 \pm 9.45	0.603	0.549	

Table [2]: Comparison of the echocardiographic parameters in the two study groups

	Groups		Test	P value
	Cases group [n= 40]	Control group [n= 20]		
Resting heart rate [beats/min]	76.10 ± 12.50	77.35 ± 12.45	0.366	0.719
P-wave duration [ms]	106.75 ± 7.64	110 ± 6.73	t1.615	0.112
PR interval [ms]	114.33 ± 10.82	112.55 ± 6.99	0.666	0.508
QRS duration [ms]	91.38 ± 7.79	93.35 ± 14.51	0.688	0.494
QT mean interval [ms]	409.78 ± 36.42	412.70 ± 11.56	0.349	0.728
LA d	37.63 ± 6.27	36.05 ± 5.18	0.969	0.337
LAV	39.48 ± 9.30	36.25 ± 8.10	1.319	0.192
LAVI	21.02 ± 4.96	18.21 ± 4.63	2.116	0.039*
IVS	1.45 ± 0.21	1.32 ± 0.17	2.442	0.018*
PWT	1.28 ± 0.17	1.17 ± 0.14	2.692	0.009*
EDD	5.47 ± 0.44	5.39 ± 0.66	0.579	0.565
ESD	3.93 ± 0.62	3.79 ± 0.84	0.757	0.452
EDV	148.23 ± 28.31	145.35 ± 40.55	0.321	0.749
EDVI	79.12 ± 15.97	72.70 ± 21.50	1.303	0.198
ESV	71.04 ± 27.02	67.27 ± 36.26	0.454	0.651
ESVI	37.71 ± 14.03	33.86 ± 19.27	0.881	0.382
LVM	339.94 ± 81.04	285.42 ± 91.43	2.354	0.022*
LVMi	181.70 ± 46.36	143.32 ± 48.84	2.970	0.004*
EF	58.70 ± 3.08	61 ± 1.92	3.048	0.003*
E	93.65 ± 9.57	90.50 ± 10.64	1.158	0.252
A	90.48 ± 15.03	82.35 ± 15.61	1.949	0.056
E/A ratio	1.08 ± 0.32	1.15 ± 0.33	0.785	0.436

Table [3]: Comparison of the echocardiographic parameters in the two study groups

	Groups		Test	P
	Cases group [n= 40]	Control group [n= 20]		
2D GLS	-12.33 ± 2.07	-16.60 ± 2.85	6.629	< 0.001*
2D GCS	-12.65 ± 2.08	-15.35 ± 2.80	4.213	< 0.001*
3D-GLS	-20.18 ± 1.92	-25.10 ± 1.71	7.726	< 0.001*
3D-GCS	-21.05 ± 1.93	-23.50 ± 1.99	2.716	0.009*

Table [4]: Predictive ability of 2D- and 3D GLS and GCS in differentiating cases with AS from control group

	2D-GLS	3D-GLS	2D-GCS	3D-GCS
AUC	0.894	0.765	0.928	0.698
95% CI of AUC	0.808 - 0.980	0.638 - 0.892	0.866 - 0.989	0.554 - 0.841
Cut off point	> -16	> -15	> -23	> -22
Sensitivity	80 %	72.5 %	87.5 %	62.5 %
Specificity	84 %	55 %	80 %	75 %
Accuracy	80 %	65 %	85 %	60 %
PPV	88 %	70 %	82 %	68 %
NPV	84 %	68 %	85 %	64 %
P	< 0.001*	0.002*	< 0.001*	0.013*

Table [5]: Comparison of the echocardiographic parameters in the cases group before and after valve replacement

	Study group		Test	P value
	Before replacement	After replacement		
LA d	37.63 ± 6.27	36.10 ± 5.20	1.117	0.371
LAV	39.48 ± 9.30	35.33 ± 7.65	2.235	0.031*
LAVI	21.02 ± 4.96	17.70 ± 4.39	3.365	0.002*
IVS	1.45 ± 0.21	1.36 ± 0.21	1.995	0.053
PWT	1.28 ± 0.17	1.44 ± 1.56	2.148	0.042*
EDD	5.47 ± 0.44	5.35 ± 0.54	1.026	0.311
ESD	3.93 ± 0.62	3.71 ± 0.71	1.394	0.171
EDV	148.23 ± 28.31	141.91 ± 33.82	0.862	0.394
EDVI	79.12 ± 15.97	70.87 ± 18	2.245	0.031*
ESV	71.04 ± 27.02	63.26 ± 30.85	1.148	0.258
ESVI	37.71 ± 14.03	31.74 ± 16.37	1.771	0.084
LVM	339.94 ± 81.04	287.90 ± 86.08	2.676	0.011*
LVMI	181.70 ± 46.36	143.99 ± 44.74	3.857	0.001*
EF	58.70 ± 3.08	60.83 ± 10.37	2.541	0.035*
E	93.65 ± 9.57	90.63 ± 9.09	1.389	0.173
A	90.48 ± 15.03	82.38 ± 16.28	2.338	0.025*
E/A ratio	1.08 ± 0.32	1.16 ± 0.33	1.073	0.290

Table [6]: Comparison of the echocardiographic parameters in the cases group before and after valve replacement

	Study group		Test	P
	Before replacement	After replacement		
GLS	-12.33 ± 2.07	-16.03 ± 2.02	7.29	< 0.001*
GCS	-12.65 ± 2.08	-15.60 ± 2.01	6.463	< 0.001*
3D-GLS	-21.18 ± 1.92	-24.58 ± 1.93	5.562	< 0.001*
3D-GCS	-22.05 ± 1.93	-24.43 ± 8.23	1.983	0.054

DISCUSSION

In the current work, both study and control groups were comparable in terms of age, gender, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and smoking, which was consistent with **Kaler et al.** [11]. We also discovered no significant difference in EF between the two groups. This was consistent with previous studies found 2D global strains to be improved after AVR in AS, even if LVEF did not alter much [12, 13]. Yet inconsistent results on the amount of LVEF improvement can be observed in other investigations [14-16].

GLS measurements in the current work after three months of aortic valve replacement were better than baseline readings. These results are in accordance with **Al-Rashid et al.** [17]. They reported that the GLS one week after TAVR was comparable to that at baseline [-15.9 ± 4.3 vs -16.8 ± 4.1; p 0.14]. However, it was considerably improved three months later [-15.9 ± 4.3% vs. -19.5 ± 3.5%; p 0.001]. GLS improves three months after TAVR, although LV EF does not alter significantly, indicating an

early recovery of LV longitudinal function after surgery.

Lozano Granero et al. [18] discovered a moderate but statistically significant improvement in GLS between baseline and discharge [GLS% 14.6 ± 5.0 at baseline; 15.7 ± 5.1 at discharge with AVR, p = 0.0116].

Kafa et al. [19] reported interesting findings in their study of patients with severe AS before and after AVR. All patients had retained EF. Despite the lengthier follow-up, GLS values improved significantly from pre-AVR [-14.8%] to post AVR [-17.2%]. Despite a preserved postoperative EF and obvious LV mass regression in patients with severe AS, about 20% of patients survived more than a year after aortic valve replacement had an abnormal LV-GLS value on postoperative echocardiography, emphasizing the importance of early intervention.

In addition, **Abdelshafey et al.** [20] evaluated 15 patients with AS and found that myocardial strain levels improved significantly. The GLS 15.3 before vs. 18.5 after, had a mean change of

2.1% [p value = 0.02], global circumferential strain [GCS 28.9 vs. 31.9] had a mean change of 2.9% [p = 0.036].

When their respective baseline levels were healthier, the amount of LV function recovery as determined by GLS and GCS on follow up was greater. This clearly reveals that worse LV function [GLS/GCS] at baseline is associated with poor LV recovery, indicating the need for early diagnosis of LV dysfunction by global longitudinal and circumferential strains to decide on the timing of aortic valve replacement. In contrast to LV ejection fraction, left ventricular end diastolic volume, or left ventricular end systolic volume, speckle tracking analysis detects modest LV function changes significantly earlier. Our findings support the idea of intervening early in aortic valve disease by including strain analysis in the evaluation of patients for aortic valve replacement. This is in accordance with previous studies with comparable results [21, 22].

Lancellotti et al. [23] showed that 2DGLS may distinguish between high- and low-risk patients for future cardiac events. **Yingchoncharoen et al.** [24] also revealed that 2DGLS has a substantial added benefit in predicting future cardiovascular events above other clinical and echocardiographic indicators.

However, this is in contrast to the findings of **Yasufumi et al.** [25] who evaluated 104 patients and discovered that 3DGLS is the most robust marker for predicting future adverse cardiac events in asymptomatic severe AS patients with intact LVEF.

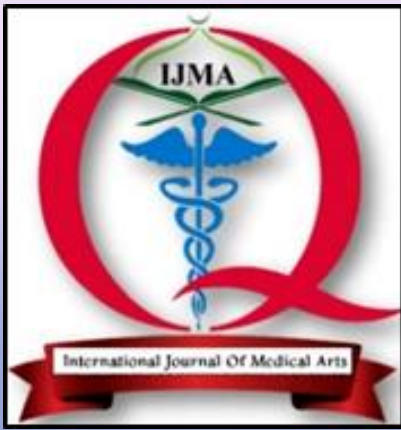
In conclusion, speckle tracking echocardiography 2D or 3D is an optional significant modality for detection of subclinical left ventricular dysfunction in patients with severe aortic stenosis and preserved EF.

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