Case Report

**Endovascular Recanalization and Angioplasty of a Lengthy, 25 Years Old Superficial Femoral Artery Occlusion**

**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Often physicians and patients believe that occluded vessels could not be recanalized because an occlusive lesion is too long or exists over a very long period. We report a successful recanalization of a lengthy, quarter-century old superficial femoral artery occlusion through a percutaneous transluminal angioplasty.

**Report:** We present the recanalization and angioplasty of the superficial femoral artery in a patient with a 37 cm long and 25 years old superficial femoral artery occlusion with limb ischemia, and who was considered as a high surgical risk. Through a subintimal dissection plane and with subsequent Pacific-balloon dilatation, two stent grafts were deployed to maintain patency. The post-intervention angiography and ankle-brachial index (ABI) showed a satisfactory primary outcome.

**Discussion:** The recent guidelines recommend the endovascular therapy as the preferred strategy in patients with long and complex femoropopliteal lesions, an adequate recommendation as our case demonstrates. This case demonstrates that neither lesion length nor duration of an occlusion should be a cause to withhold an endovascular treatment.

**Discription**

A 62-year-old man presented with progressive claudication in the left leg after maximum 100m walk. He has dyslipoproteinemia, systemic arterial hypertension and type II diabetes mellitus, anda history of multiple percutaneous coronary interventions, ilioprolfudal graft surgery 24 years ago, and a 10-month history of right lower leg amputation. He had good femoral pulses on both sides but the left popliteal, tibialis posterior and dorsalis pedis pulses were not palpable. The left ankle-brachial index (ABI) at rest was 0.31.

Duplexsonography and angiography revealed bilateral ostial SFA occlusions; the left occlusion was 37cm long extending to the popliteal artery (Figure 1). The left common femoral artery showed a high-grade stenosis and the deep femoral artery a moderate one, with a poor distal run-off. The popliteal artery was reconstituted via collaterals and showed a subtotal stenosis. The left iliopfemoral graft was also occluded. The patient was considered as high risk for a repeat peripheral bypass surgery; he was therefore considered for a left endovascular intervention.

Using the right common femoral artery for crossover access, a 45-cm-long, 6-Fr Terumo®-sheath was advanced into the right external iliac artery. There was no haemodynamically significant pressure-gradient between the aorta and left common iliac artery. An angled 0.035 inch hydrophilic Guidewire (Radifocus; Terumo®, Tokyo, Japan) with the support of a 5 Fr catheter (Glideteach
After changing to a shorter Pacific Balloon because of P2-segment plaquestenosis, the balloon was successfully advanced into the distal vessel, and was subsequently dilated. Because of the eventual recoil of this very heavily calcified stenosis, two self-expanding Bard Life stents were introduced into the spot from a distal access of the popliteal artery. Finally, it showed a good angiographic result.

In a last step, we dilated the common femoral artery with Pacific©-balloon with a good primary outcome (Figure 3). The ABI at rest after the intervention was 0.53 compared to 0.31 before the intervention. Four week post-intervention showed persistent good clinical outcome.

**Discussion**

PAD is a very common disorder, the severity of which is expected to ascend thereby leading to an increase in the numbers of endovascular and surgical treatment options.

The optimal treatment strategy of PAD vis-à-vis endovascular vs. surgical intervention is still the subject of discussions due to the paucity of randomized studies. However, very often physicians and patients believe, that occluded vessels could not be recanalized because an occlusion is too long or exists over a very long period.

Adam et al. published in 2005 the multicenter randomized BASIL (Bypass versus Angioplasty in Severe Ischemia of the Leg) trial [8] which showed that there are no overwhelming advantages of angioplasty over surgery for patients with chronic critical limb ischemia (CLI) due to infrapopliteal lesions. Similarly, the 30-day mortality as well as the 6-month amputation-free survival was similar in both strategies. However, surgery was associated with a higher morbidity (57% vs. 41%), mainly due to wound infection and myocardial infarction and was more expensive during the first year, due to the longer hospital stay. Angioplasty on the other hand, showed higher failure rates (20% vs. 3% at 1 year), resulting in higher re-intervention rates (27% vs.17%).
However, with the development of self-expandable Nitinol Stents and increasing operator experience, new guidelines to recommended endovascular therapy as the preferred strategy for patients with long and complex femoropopliteal lesions [4]; just as it was recommended for patients who had failed surgical intervention.

This recommendation notwithstanding, the selection of the most appropriate revascularization strategy should be made on a case-by-case basis by considering the anatomical suitability, co-morbidities, local availability and expertise, and the patient’s preference [8]. Despite these recommendations, for common femoral arterial disease, the femoral endarterectomy and the profundaplasty remain the procedures of choice because long-term patency results are still superior to any other interventions [8-10].

References