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의학석사 학위논문

Incidence, Diagnosis and Prognosis of Cardiac Amyloidosis

심장 유전분증의 발병률,
진단 및 예후에 대한 연구

2012 년 10 월

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이 민 호

A thesis of the Degree of Master of Science

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Cardiac Amyloidosis

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Incidence, Diagnosis and Prognosis of Cardiac Amyloidosis

by
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fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cardiac involvement is frequent in systemic amyloidosis and is the most important determinant of clinical outcome. The aims of this study were to assess the incidence and prognosis of cardiac amyloidosis and discuss diagnostic issues related to cardiac amyloidosis.

Methods: We retrospectively studied all patients diagnosed with systemic amyloidosis who presented to our institution from January 1999 to December 2011.

Results: Of the 129 patients with systemic amyloidosis, cardiac amyloidosis was diagnosed in 62 patients. At a mean of 3 years' follow-up of the patients with systemic amyloidosis, there was statistically significant difference in mortality between patients with cardiac amyloidosis and the rest of the patients (38.3% vs. 14.2%, log rank $p = 0.014$). And decreased LV function was the only factor independently associated with survival in cardiac amyloidosis patients in both univariate and multivariate analysis (HR 3.936, 95% CI 1.247–12.425, $p = 0.020$). In the diagnosis of monoclonal gammopathy, serum or urine PEP is not sensitive enough to be used clinically compared to serum FLC assay (35.8% vs. 96.4%).

Conclusions: In systemic amyloidosis, cardiac involvement is the most important determinant of prognosis and decreased LV function was independently associated with survival in cardiac amyloidosis patients.

Keywords: Cardiac amyloidosis, systemic amyloidosis, monoclonal gammopathy

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INTRODUCTION

Amyloidosis is a clinical disorder caused by extracellular deposition of insoluble abnormal fibrils, derived from aggregation of misfolded normally soluble protein^{1,2}. Many different proteins can form amyloid fibrils, and the types of amyloidosis are classified on the basis of the amyloidogenic protein as well as by the distribution of amyloid deposits as either systemic or localized³. In systemic amyloidosis, amyloid deposits are present in the viscera, blood vessel walls, and connective tissues. In contrast, in localized disease, the deposits are confined to specific foci or to a particular organ or tissue.

The heart is not infrequently involved in systemic amyloidosis. However, diagnosis of cardiac involvement is not easy and frequently underdiagnosed. Making an early diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis is critical because, once clinically significant heart disease is present, the prognosis is extremely poor.

The gold standard test for diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis is endomyocardial biopsy⁴, but cannot be performed in every patient because of its invasiveness. Thus, in clinical practice, diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis is often made in patients with systemic amyloidosis when echocardiographic findings suggest infiltrative cardiomyopathy⁵⁻⁸. Recently, cardiovascular magnetic resonance imaging (CMR) with late gadolinium enhancement (LGE) sequences was shown to be useful for the diagnosis of cardiac involvement in systemic amyloidosis⁹⁻¹³.

In the present study, we assessed the incidence and prognosis of cardiac amyloidosis and discuss diagnostic issues related to cardiac amyloidosis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Population

We retrospectively studied all patients diagnosed as systemic amyloidosis who presented to the Seoul National University Hospital, Korea from January 1999 to December 2011. This study was approved by the institutional review board at our institution. Patients were followed up and evaluated for development of clinical events, using electronic medical records.

Methods

Detection of the presence of monoclonal gammopathy and diagnosis of systemic amyloidosis. For the detection of the presence of monoclonal gammopathy, protein electrophoresis (PEP) for the presence of M protein or immunofixation electrophoresis (IEP), free light chain (FLC) assay in serum and/or urine were used. Diagnosis of systemic amyloidosis was based on histologic confirmation of tissue deposition of amyloid. At the time of histologic confirmation, specimens were stained with Congo red and diagnosis of amyloidosis was made when the deposition of amorphous material which showed apple-green birefringence under the polarized microscope was detected¹⁴. Immunohistochemical stains using antibodies directed against serum amyloid P component, transthyretin (TTR), kappa and lambda light chains, and serum amyloid A were performed simultaneously¹⁵.

Diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis. Diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis was made when 1) amyloid deposition was demonstrated in the myocardium by the endomyocardial biopsy, or 2) cardiac involvement either in echocardiography or CMR was suggested in patient with systemic amyloidosis. Echocardiography was performed in all patients with systemic amyloidosis. In the echocardiographic findings, cardiac involvement was suggested when mean LV thickness > 12 mm (average of end-diastolic septal and inferolateral walls in the parasternal long-axis view)¹⁶ and standard 12-lead electrocardiograms (ECG) showed low voltage QRS (defined as a QRS amplitude < 0.5 mV in all limb leads). When CMR was performed, cardiac involvement was suggested when there was global or subendocardial LGE of the myocardium.

Other biomarkers. Cardiotroponin-I (cTNI, reference normal: < 0.5 ng/mL), B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP, reference normal: ≤ 100 pg/ml) or pro-type natriuretic peptide (pro-BNP, reference normal: 0–84 pg/ml for men under 50 years; 0–194 pg/ml for men above 50 years; 0–155 pg/ml for women under 50 years; 0–222 pg/ml for women above 50 years) were measured.

Diagnosis of other organ involvement in amyloidosis. The 10th International Symposium on Amyloid and Amyloidosis was held 18–22 April 2004, in Tours, France. In anticipation of this meeting, 13 leaders in the field were invited to submit their institutional criteria, from which the current guidelines were developed. We adopted these guidelines for the diagnosis of organ involvement in amyloidosis¹⁶.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 17.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois). Discrete data are summarized as frequencies, while continuous variables as mean \pm SD. Chi-square or Fisher's exact test were used for comparison of categorical variables. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for normality test. Student's t-test was used for comparison of normally distributed continuous variables. In case of non-normal distribution, Mann-Whitney U test, Wilcoxon signed rank test were used. Survival estimates and cumulative event rates were estimated using the Kaplan-Meier method. Risk factors for survival were evaluated by both, univariate and multivariate analysis using Cox proportional hazards model. When verifying the analyses results with stepwise forward Cox's regression, a p value of 0.10 was used to exclude or include the variables. A p value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Patients

Baseline characteristics of the patients with systemic amyloidosis and cardiac amyloidosis are summarized in Table 1–2. From January 1999 to December 2011, 129 patients were newly diagnosed with systemic amyloidosis. Among them, 76 patients (58.9%) were male, mean age was 57.2 ± 11.5 . Hypertension was found in 34 patients (26.4%), DM in 11 (8.5%), dyslipidemia in 7 (5.4%), chronic kidney disease (CKD) in 25 (19.2%) and smoking history in 2 (1.6%). Cardiac involvement was found in 62 patients (48.1%) and kidney was second most commonly involved organ ($n = 49$, 40.0%).

Baseline characteristics were not different between patients with cardiac involvement ($n = 62$) and without cardiac involvement ($n = 67$) except for the age and CKD. Patients with cardiac involvement were older and had less CKD than patients without cardiac involvement (60.1 ± 9.7 vs. 54.5 ± 12.4 , $p = 0.006$; 8.1% vs. 29.9%, $p = 0.002$). The mean follow-up periods were 725 ± 944.9 days, vs. 999.5 ± 993.0 days ($p = 0.111$) in patient with and without cardiac involvement, respectively.

Diagnostic characteristics

Table 3 shows the characteristics of the patients with systemic amyloidosis ($n = 129$). Light chain (AL) amyloidosis was present in 127 (98.4%) and senile

systemic amyloidosis (SSA) in 2 (1.6%). Among the patients with AL amyloidosis, 32 patients (25.2%) were kappa light chain type, and 75 patients (59.1%) were lambda light chain type. There were positive findings of serum or urine PEP in 43 of 120 patients (35.8%), serum or urine IEP in 43 of 103 (41.7%), serum FLC assay in 81 of 84 (96.4%). Laboratory, ECG, echocardiographic and CMR findings in cardiac amyloidosis are shown in detail in Table 4. In patients with cardiac amyloidosis (n = 62), AL amyloidosis was present in 60 (96.8%) and SSA in 2 (3.2%). Among the patients with cardiac involvement in AL amyloidosis, 11 cases (19.6%) were kappa light chain type and 45 cases (80.4%) were lambda light chain type.

In the laboratory findings, 26 of 27 patients (96.3%) had elevation of BNP or pro-BNP. Endomyocardial biopsy was available in 30 patients and positive pathology compatible with cardiac amyloidosis was present in 29 patients (96.6%). There was low voltage QRS at ECG in 53 of 62 patients (85.5%) (Figure 1). Echocardiography was available in all patients. Among them, increased LV wall thickness was present in 60 patients (96.8%), decreased LV function in 31 (50.0%), pericardial effusion in 37 (60.7%) and diastolic dysfunction in 42 (68.9%) (Figure 2). CMR was also available in 15 patients and positive finding was present in 13 (86.7%) (Figure 3). In detail, 29 patients were diagnosed with cardiac involvement by endomyocardial biopsy, and among the rest of the patients (n = 33), cardiac involvement was suggested by the echocardiographic findings in 29 patients and both in echocardiographic and CMR findings in 4 patients.

Survival and Prognosis

At a mean of 3 years' follow-up of the patients with systemic amyloidosis, death had occurred in 17 cases in patients with cardiac involvement ($n = 62$) and 8 patients without cardiac involvement ($n = 67$). There were statistically significant differences in mortality at a mean of 3 years' follow-up (38.3% vs. 14.2%, log rank $p = 0.014$) (Figure 4).

Regarding to the effect of treatment (chemotherapy, autologous stem cell transplantation and cardiac transplantation) on the prognosis, in patients with systemic amyloidosis, death had occurred in 20 cases in treatment group ($n = 100$) and 5 cases in no-treatment group ($n = 29$). There was no statistically significant difference in mortality between the groups (25.6% vs. 20.9%, log rank $p = 0.771$) (Figure 5). In addition, no significant effect of treatment on the prognosis was also noted in patients with cardiac amyloidosis, at a mean of 3 years' follow-up. Death had occurred in 14 cases in treatment group ($n = 52$) and 3 cases in no-treatment group ($n = 10$) (37.4% vs. 33.3%, log rank $p = 0.316$) (Figure 6).

In univariate analysis of the patients with cardiac involvement, decreased LV function was the only significant variable associated with survival. After multivariate analysis, decreased LV function was the only factor independently associated with survival, with a hazard ratio of 3.936 ($p = 0.020$; 95% confidence interval, 1.247–12.425) (Table 5)

Table 1. Baseline characteristics in patients with amyloidosis

	Systemic amyloidosis (n = 129)	With cardiac involvement (n = 62)	Without cardiac involvement (n = 67)	*p value
Age, years	57.2 ± 11.5	60.1 ± 9.7	54.5 ± 12.4	0.006
Male, n (%)	76 (58.9%)	32 (51.6%)	44 (65.7%)	0.112
HTN, n (%)	34 (58.9%)	18 (29.0%)	16 (23.9%)	0.552
DM, n (%)	11 (8.5%)	3 (4.8%)	8 (11.9%)	0.210
Dyslipidemia, n (%)	7 (5.4%)	3 (4.8%)	4 (6.0%)	> 0.999
Smoking History, n (%)	2 (1.6%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.5%)	> 0.999
CKD, n (%)	25 (19.4%)	5 (8.1%)	20 (29.9%)	0.002
Treatment, n (%)	100 (77.5%)	52 (83.9%)	48 (71.6%)	0.139
Mean follow-up, days	867.8 ± 976.1	725.5 ± 944.9	999.5 ± 993.0	0.111

* p value between with cardiac involvement and without cardiac involvement

CKD, chronic kidney disease

Table 2. Frequency of organ involvement in patients with systemic amyloidosis

Systemic amyloidosis (n = 129)	
Involved organs, n (%)	
Heart	63 (48.8%)
Kidney	49 (40.0%)
Gastrointestinal tract	20 (15.5%)
Soft tissue	10 (7.8%)
Liver	9 (7.0%)
Lung	5 (3.9%)
Nerve	1 (0.8%)

Table 3. Patients' laboratory characteristics in systemic amyloidosis

Systemic amyloidosis (n = 129)	
Types, n (%)	
AL amyloidosis	127 (98.4%)
SSA	2 (1.6%)
Subtypes of AL amyloidosis (n = 107)	
Kappa light chain, n (%)	32 (25.2%)
Lambda light chain, n (%)	75 (59.1%)
Laboratory characteristics	
Positive of serum or urine PEP (n = 120)	43 (35.8%)
Positive of serum or urine IEP (n = 103)	43 (41.7%)
Positive of serum FLC assay (n = 84)	81 (96.4%)
Positive of immunohistochemistry (n = 63)	43 (68.3%)
AL, amyloid light chain; SSA, senile systemic amyloidosis; PEP, protein electrophoresis; IEP, immunofixation electrophoresis, FLC, free light chain.	

Table 4. Patients' laboratory, ECG, echocardiographic and CMR characteristics in cardiac amyloidosis

Cardiac amyloidosis (n = 62)	
Types of amyloidosis (n = 62)	
AL amyloidosis, n (%)	60 (96.8%)
SSA, n (%)	2 (3.2%)
Subtypes of light chain (n = 56)	
Kappa light chain, n (%)	11 (19.6%)
Lambda light chain, n (%)	45 (80.4%)
Laboratory characteristics, n (%)	
Elevation of cTNI (n = 18)	0 (0%)
Elevation of BNP or pro-BNP (n = 26)	25 (96.2%)
Endomyocardial biopsy (n = 30)	
Positive pathology, n (%)	29 (96.6%)
ECG characteristics (n = 62)	
Low voltage QRS, n (%)	53 (85.5%)
Echocardiographic characteristics (n = 62)	
Positive echocardiography, n (%)	60 (96.8%)
LV EF < 50%, n (%)	31 (50.0%)
Presence of pericardial effusion, n (%)	37 (60.7%)
Presence of diastolic dysfunction, n (%)	42 (68.9%)
CMR characteristics (n = 15)	
Positive CMR, n (%)	13 (86.7%)

AL, amyloid light chain; SSA, senile systemic amyloidosis; cTNI, cardiotroponin-I; BNP, B-type natriuretic peptide; pro-BNP, pro-B-type natriuretic peptide; B2MG, beta-2-microglobulin; PEP, protein electrophoresis; IEP, immunofixation electrophoresis, FLC, free light chain; LV EF, Left ventricular ejection fraction; CMR, cardiovascular magnetic resonance imaging

Table 5. Prognosis valuables for cardiac amyloidosis

Univariate Analysis		Multivariate Analysis	
Variables	p value	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	p value
Low voltage QRS	0.602	0.506 (0.137–1.869)	0.307
Increased LV wall thickness	0.681	0.276 (0.028–2.720)	0.270
Decreased LV function	0.030	3.936 (1.247–12.425)	0.020
Pericardial effusion	0.486	1.368 (0.520–3.596)	0.525
Diastolic dysfunction	0.754	1.036 (0.361–2.973)	0.947
LV, Left ventricular			

Figure 1. ECG in a patient with cardiac amyloidosis. Note the low voltage QRS in the limb leads.

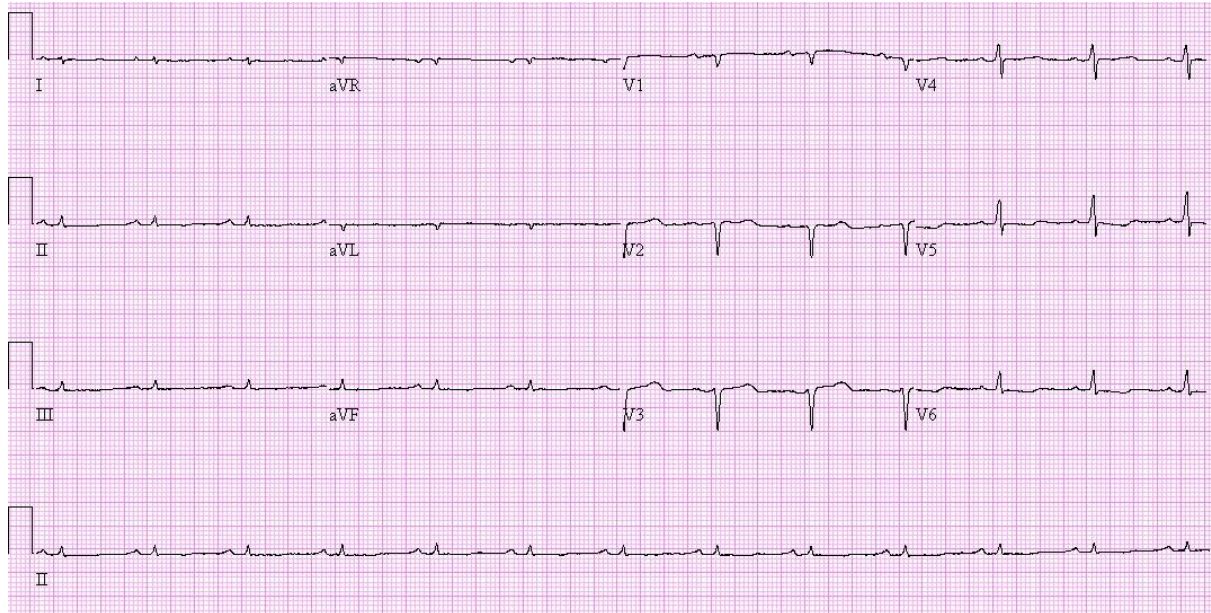


Figure 2. Echocardiography in a patient with cardiac amyloidosis. Top left and right, parasternal long-axis and apical four chamber view demonstrates concentric left ventricular thickening with small amount of pericardial effusion. Bottom left and right, transmitral doppler flow shows a pseudonormalization pattern with increased E/E' ratio.

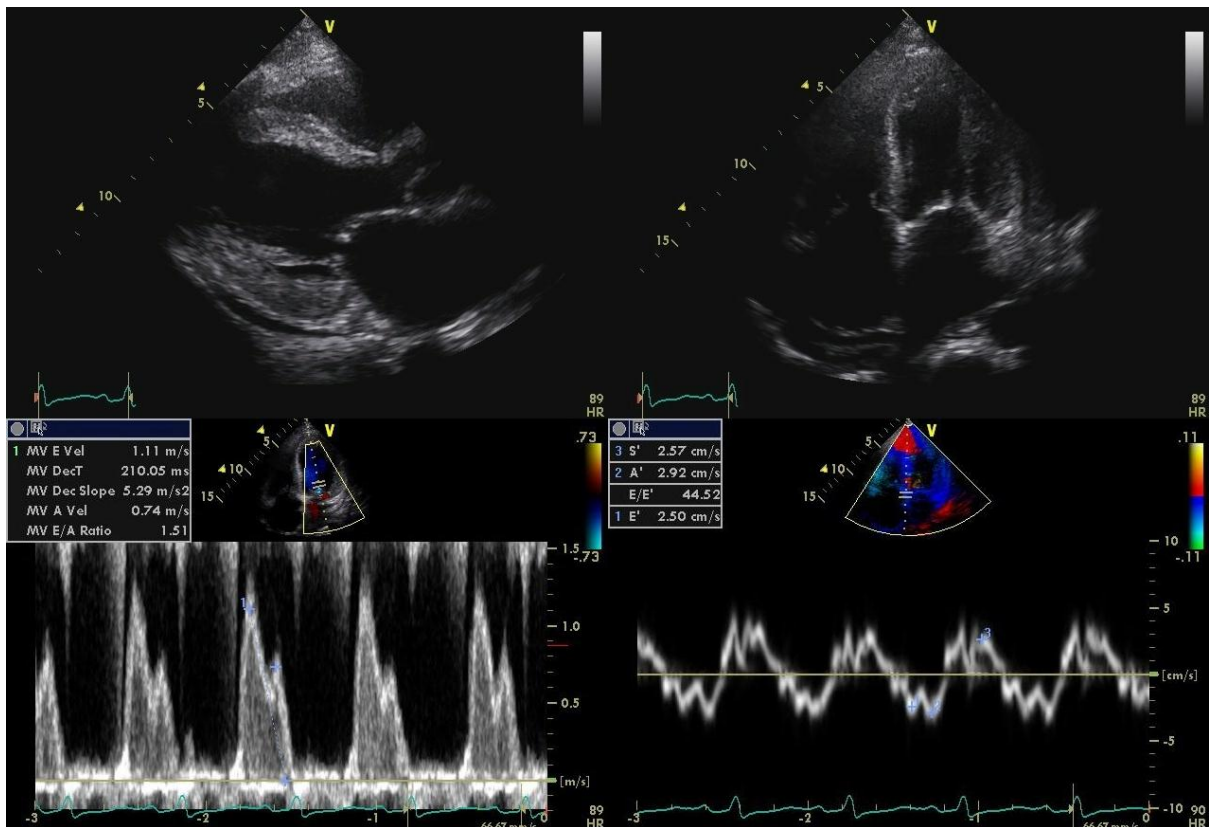
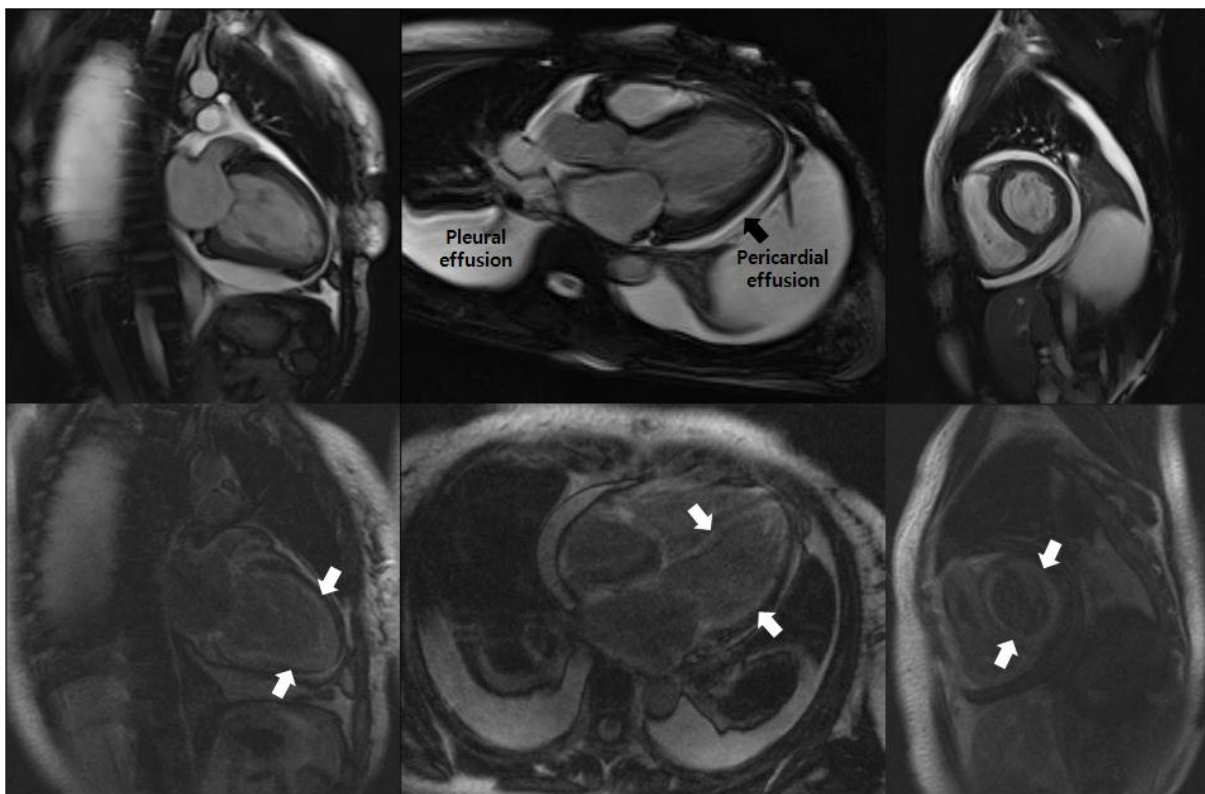


Figure 3. CMR in a patient with cardiac amyloidosis. Top row shows diastolic frames from cines (vertical long axis, horizontal longaxis, and short axis, respectively) showing a thickened left ventricular wall and presence of pericardial effusions. Bottom row shows LGE images in the same planes. The vertical and horizontal longaxis image demonstrates global subendocardial hyperenhancement of both ventricles, both atria and the interatrial septum (white arrows).



CMR, cardiovascular magnetic resonance imaging; LGE, late gadolinium enhancement

Figure 4. Kaplan–Meier survival curves of patients with systemic amyloidosis with versus without cardiac involvement.

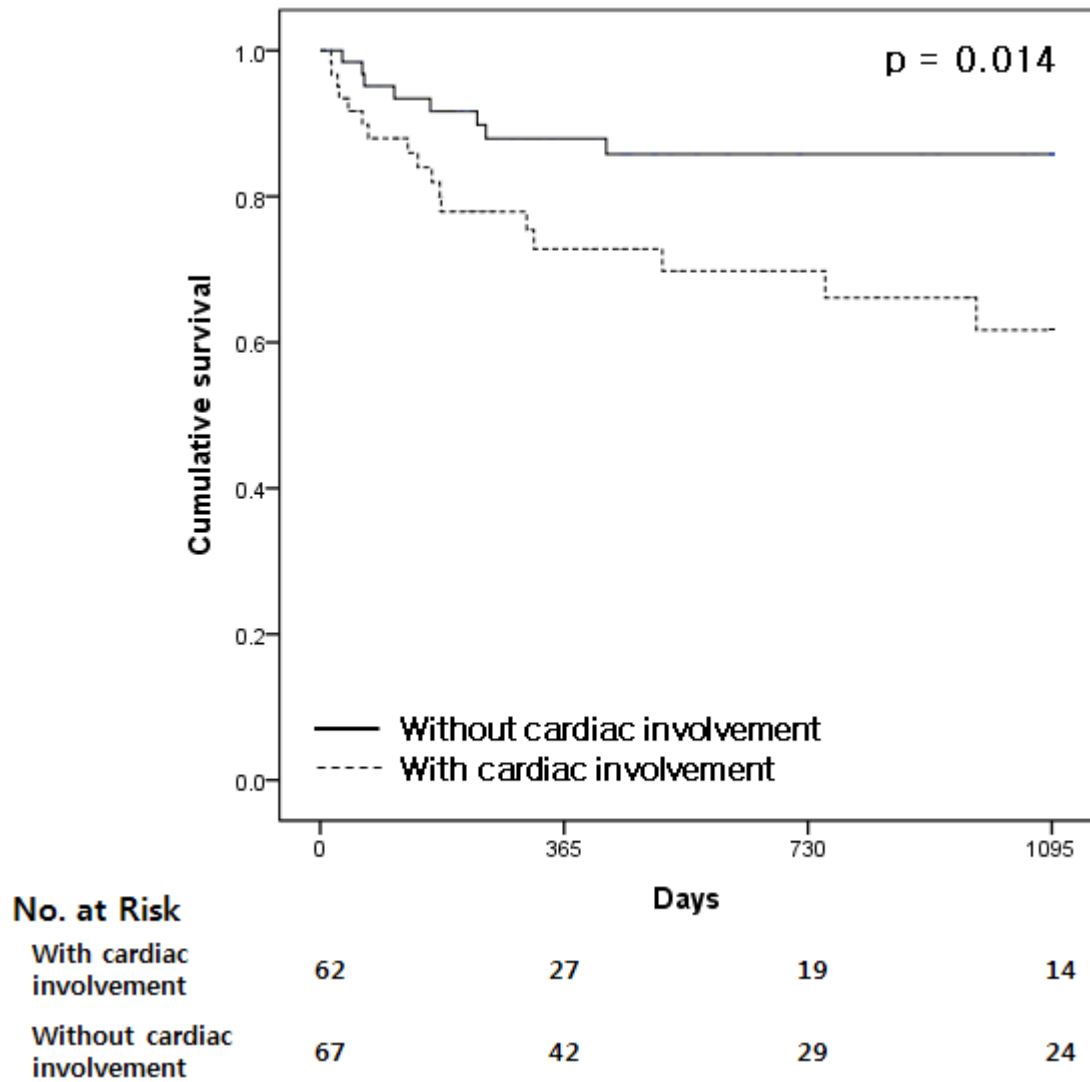


Figure 5. Kaplan–Meier survival curves of patients with systemic amyloidosis with versus without treatment.

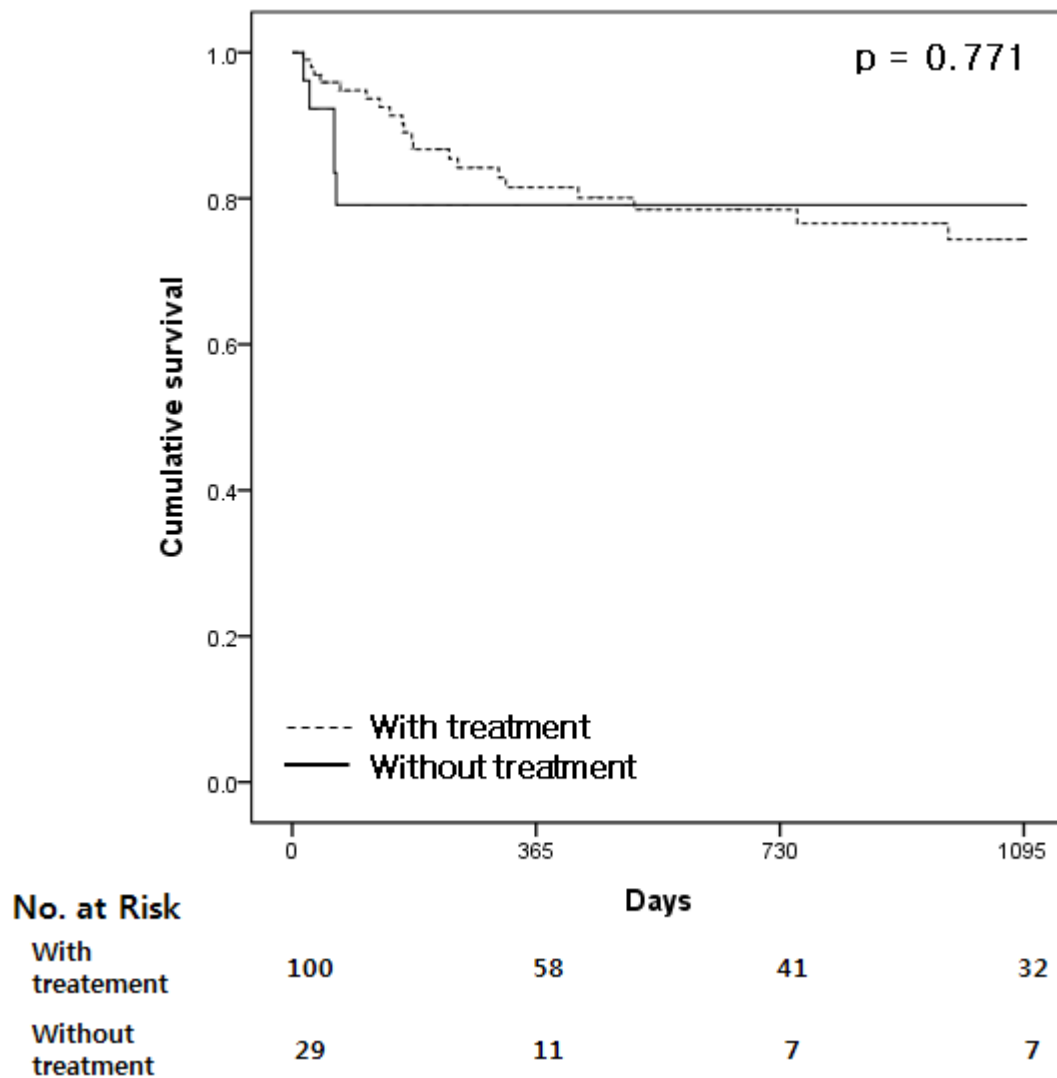
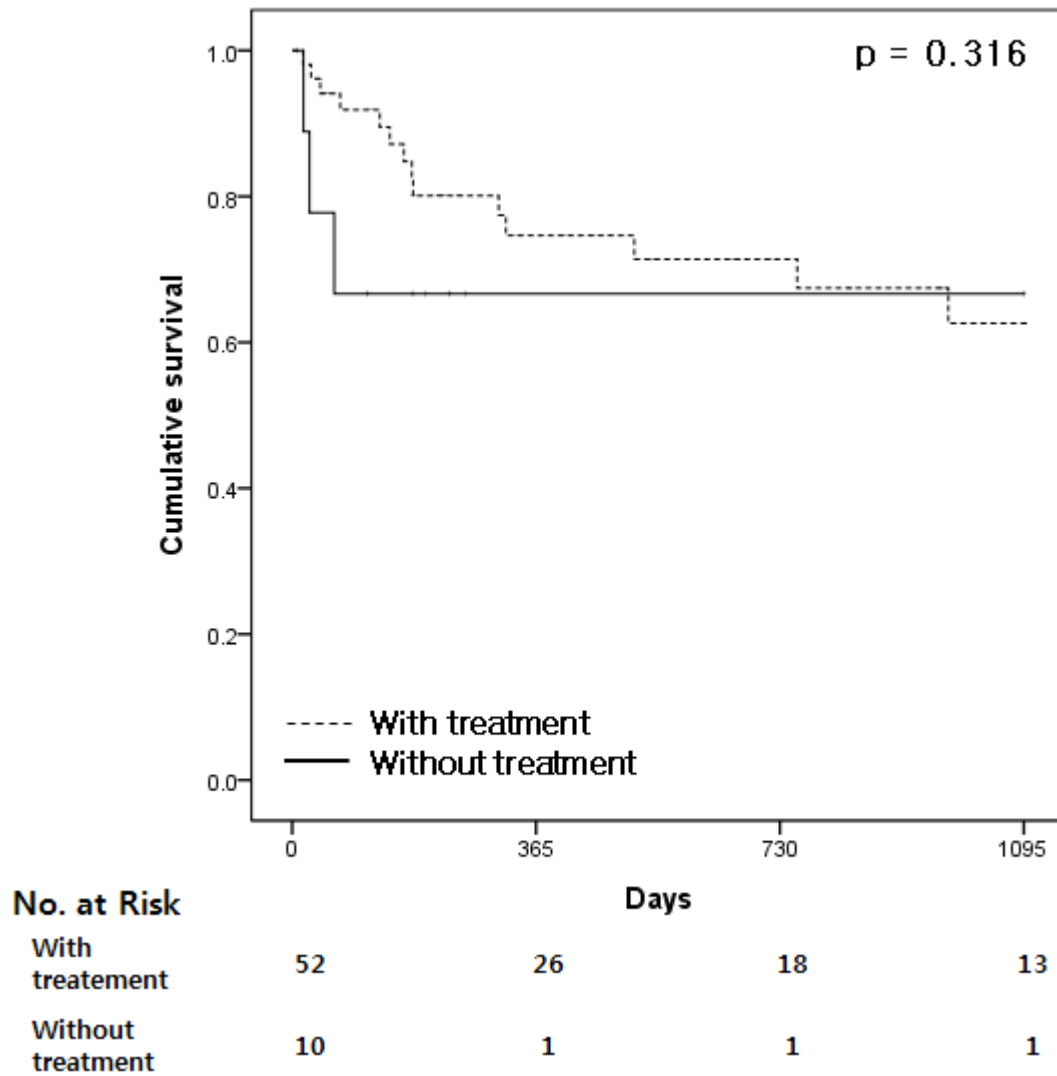


Figure 6. Kaplan–Meier survival curves of patients with cardiac amyloidosis with versus without treatment.



DISCUSSION

Cardiac involvement is frequent in systemic amyloidosis and is a major determinant of treatment options and prognosis¹⁷. Cardiac involvement is observed in about 50% of the patients with AL amyloidosis¹⁸ and is the cause of death in approximately half of patients with AL amyloidosis¹⁹. And fewer than 5% of the patients with AL amyloidosis involving the heart have clinically isolated cardiac disease²⁰. In our study, cardiac involvement was demonstrated in 48.8% cases of systemic amyloidosis, mostly by the AL amyloidosis, only 2 patients were proven to be SSA, and there was no patient with isolated cardiac involvement.

Diagnostic Issues in Systemic Amyloidosis

Once a tissue diagnosis of amyloidosis has been established, confirmation of AL amyloidosis, which is the most frequent type of systemic amyloidosis with cardiac involvement, requires demonstration of a monoclonal gammopathy. Presence of monoclonal gammopathy can be demonstrated by the bone marrow biopsy showing predominance of kappa or lambda producing plasma cells or by the presence of a monoclonal light chain in the serum or urine. Between PEP and IEP/FLC assay, IEP or FLC assay is favored because of the high sensitivity compared to PEP.

In the present study, we confirmed the very high sensitivity of serum FLC assay in the diagnosis of AL amyloidosis with the sensitivity of 96.4% in contrast to low sensitivity in serum or urine PEP (35.8%). This finding is supported by several studies^{21,22}. Morris et al reported that in study of 31 AL amyloidosis

patients, serum and urine PEP was positive in 30%, serum IEP in 67%, urine IEP in 83%, serum and urine IEP in 90%, absolute clonal light chain ≥ 100 mg/L in 87%, and abnormal kappa lambda ratio with increased clonal light chain in 97%²³. Normal FLC assay result in the presence of biopsy-proven amyloidosis should lead to a thorough search for SSA or familial amyloidosis.

Diagnostic Issues in Cardiac Amyloidosis

Although the gold standard for diagnosis of cardiac amyloidosis is endomyocardial biopsy, ECG is considered a key player to orient diagnostic suspicion of cardiac amyloidosis, with low voltage QRS providing a particularly valuable noninvasive clue. Dubrey et al reported that more than 70% of the patients with AL cardiac amyloidosis exhibited low voltage amplitudes²⁰ and in another series, Murtagh et al found that only 46% of the patients with primary systemic amyloidosis and biopsy-proven cardiac involvement exhibited low voltage amplitudes²⁴.

The most common echocardiographic feature is thickening of the LV wall^{5,8,25-28}. The combination of increased LV mass in the absence of high ECG voltages may be more specific for infiltrative diseases, of which amyloid is the most common^{25,29}. High sensitivity (72% to 79%) and specificity (91% to 100%) have been reported for this combination^{27,29}. In the present study, low voltage QRS was present in 84.1% and increased LV wall thickness was present in 96.8% of the patients.

CMR imaging now has an established role in the diagnosis of cardiac involvement. Although, CMR was available only in small number of the patients in

the present study, LGE in a global or subendocardial distribution was present in 13 of 15 (86.7%) patients, similar to the study of Perugini¹³. He reported that gadolinium enhancement by CMR was detected in 16 of 21 (76%) patients with histologically proven systemic amyloidosis and echocardiographic diagnosis of cardiac involvement¹³. Subsequent studies have substantiated the diagnostic value of CMR with LGE in identifying cardiac involvement, and suggested that the presence of LGE may confer prognostic information^{12,30,31}.

Survival and Prognosis in Cardiac Amyloidosis

The prognosis of the amyloidosis varies, but it is generally poor if the disease is untreated. Among various prognostic factors, the extent of cardiac involvement is the most important determinant of clinical outcome^{17,32,33}. In the present study, the survival is worse in patients with cardiac involvement than without cardiac involvement and 1-year, 2-year and 3-year survival of the patients with cardiac involvement were 72.8%, 69.8% and 61.7%, respectively. And 82.3% patients were treated with chemotherapy, 19.4% with autologous stem cell transplantation and 4.8% with cardiac transplantation. The survival rates of our study were markedly better than in the study of Kyle, who reported a 1-year survival of approximately 30%³⁴ and similar to the previous study of Kristen, who reported 1- and 3-year survival of 68% and 63%³², respectively. Deaths were more in patients not eligible for high-dose chemotherapy and autologous stem cell transplantation indicating a marked beneficial effect of this potentially curative treatment approach on survival. High-dose melphalan chemotherapy and autologous stem cell

transplantation is generally accepted as a therapeutic approach to improve survival^{35–37} and quality of life³⁸ in AL amyloidosis.

Previously proposed associations with poor prognosis in cardiac amyloidosis include reduced EF, increased LV wall thickness on echocardiography, low voltage QRS in ECG, and the type of amyloidosis (with worse prognosis in AL compared with TTR type)³². In addition, the degree of diastolic dysfunction³³ and suppression of amyloidogenic serum light chains by chemotherapy, and lower baseline values and greater reductions in pro-BNP have been associated with improved outcome^{39,40}. In the present study, only decreased LV function was associated with survival with marginal significance in both univariate and multivariate analysis.

Study Limitations

First, given the rarity of systemic amyloidosis and cardiac amyloidosis, patient numbers were relatively small although we reviewed 13-years' medical records from our institution. Therefore, some detailed comparisons were outside the scope of this study, and further work is needed for this. Second, a large loss to follow-up of our study may be a particular source of bias. For example, in case of the patients with systemic amyloidosis, 61 in 129 patients (47.3%) and with cardiac amyloidosis, 25 in 62 patients (40.3%) were lost to follow-up. Third, cardiac histology was only present in a subset of patients, and the decision to perform a cardiac biopsy was made on clinical grounds, which may introduce bias. Finally, though CMR shows promise for diagnosing cardiac amyloidosis if echocardiographic features are suspicious, CMR was only available in 24.2% of the patients with

cardiac amyloidosis in our study. Therefore some issues related to CMR were not discussed enough.

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국문 초록

서론: 전신성 유전분증에서 심장 침범은 흔하게 관찰되며, 심장 침범 여부는 임상 경과에 가장 중요한 영향을 미치는 인자이다. 이 연구의 목적은 심장 유전분증의 발병률과 예후를 확인하고 심장 유전분증 진단과 관련된 쟁점에 대하여 논의하는 데에 있다.

방법: 우리는 본 연구를 위하여 1999 년 1 월부터 2011 년 12 월까지 서울대병원에서 전신성 유전분증을 진단받은 모든 환자를 후향적으로 연구하였다.

결과: 상기 기간 동안 전신성 유전분증으로 진단된 129 명의 환자 중에, 62 명은 심장 유전분증으로 진단되었다. 전신성 유전분증 환자에 대하여 3 년의 추적 관찰 기간 동안, 심장 침범이 있는 경우, 없는 경우보다 통계적으로 유의하게 사망률이 높았다. (38.3% vs. 14.2%, log rank $p = 0.014$). 또한, 단변량 및 다변량 분석 결과, 좌심실 기능 감소는 통계적으로 유의하게 독립적으로 사망률을 높일 수 있음이 확인되었다 (HR 3.936, 95% CI 1.247–12.425, $p = 0.020$). 또한, 단클론성 감마병증 진단과 관련하여, 혈청 혹은 소변을 검체로 하는 단백영동검사는 유리형 경쇄 분석 검사만큼 민감도가 높지 않았다. (35.8% vs. 96.4%)

결론: 전신성 유전분증에서, 심장 침범의 여부는 예후의 가장 중요한 결정 인자이며, 좌심실 기능 감소는 독립적으로 심장 유전분증 환자의 사망률을 높인다.

주요어: 심장 유전분증, 전신성 유전분증, 단클론성 감마병증

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