THE RISING NUMBER OF PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED HEART FAILURE WHO RECEIVE DURABLE MECHANICAL CIRCULATORY SUPPORT (MCS) DEVICES requires improved recognition of device complications (1). Imaging is invariably needed because the clinical presentation is nonspecific. In our institution, we perform both a baseline echocardiographic study and a pump speed optimization test when left ventricular assist device (LVAD) dysfunction is suspected (2). Additionally, we obtain a contrast electrocardiogram (ECG)-gated multi-detector cardiac computed tomography (MDCT) study to screen for complications in patients without significant impaired kidney function. With fast acquisition, superior spatial resolution, and superior image quality, ECG-gated MDCT could directly visualize the entire MCS systems (except for the pump interior) and

From the *Methodist DeBakey Heart and Vascular Center, The Methodist Hospital, Houston, Texas; and the †Department of Cardiology, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas. Dr. Estep is a consultant for and receives speakers fees from Thoratec Corp. Dr. Chang has received a research grant from Astellas. All authors have reported that they have no relationships relevant to the contents of this paper to disclose.
surrounding anatomy from multiple views (Figure 1), albeit with some radiation/contrast exposure. This iPIX illustrates the utility of MDCT in diagnosing a spectrum of post-implant complications, including cannula complications (Figure 2, Online Video 1), pump and aortic root thrombosis (Figure 3 and 4), and surgical emergencies, among patients supported with LVAD, biventricular assist device, and total artificial heart (Figure 5, Online Videos 2 and 3).

**FIGURE 2** HeartMate II LVAD-Related Surgical Complications

Case 2 (A). Malposition of inflow cannula associated suction events and ventricular tachycardia in a 64-year-old man. Two-dimensional multiplanar reformatted image showed a malpositioned inflow cannula (block arrow) stuck into the interventricular septum (Online Video 1). Case 3 (B, C). Marked kinking of outflow cannula in a 68-year-old man with device alarms indicating low-flow and high power spikes. (B) Two-dimensional coronal view showed marked kinking at 2 points (solid arrows) of the outflow graft (broken arrow). (C) A 3-dimensional volume-rendered image demonstrated the positions of both the inflow (bent arrow) and outflow cannulae/graft. Case 4 (D). Air in outflow cannula in a 48-year-old man with pump power spikes and altered mental status. On noncontrast imaging, air (asterisk) was seen in the outflow cannula/graft (broken arrow), but no kinking or malposition. The differential includes infection or suboptimal intraoperative flushing after implant. Our patient did not have evidence of infection. Asc Ao = ascending aorta; other abbreviations as in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 3** HeartMate II LVAD Thrombosis

Case 5 (A and B). Thrombus of inflow cannula (IC) in a 57-year-old man with power spike alarms 1 week post-implantation. Multiplanar reformatted (A) and axial (B) views showed a large filling defect (asterisk) in the external half of the IC (block arrow) that is due to stasis/slow-flow or thrombus as suggested by the much lower computed tomography (CT) attenuating number compared with the internal half of the cannulae and LV/DA (B). Successful device exchange confirmed presence of thrombus. Case 6 (C and D). Thrombus in LVAD outflow cannula/graft in a 58-year-old man with device alarms and clinical hemolysis. (C) Coronal oblique view revealed absence of contrast (asterisk) within the outflow cannula/graft (broken arrow). (D) Very low CT attenuating number is suggestive of thrombus. Block arrow (C) indicates IC with suboptimal contrast enhancement similar to LV (D) is likely due to low-flow state. Successful device exchange confirms presence of thrombus with sparing of the IC. DA = descending aorta; OG = outflow graft; PC = pericardium; other abbreviations as in Figure 1.
REFERENCES


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REPRINT REQUESTS AND CORRESPONDENCE: Dr. Su Min Chang, Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center, 6550 Fannin Street, Suite 677, Houston, Texas 77030. E-mail: smchang@HoustonMethodist.org.

APPENDIX For supplemental videos and their legends, please see the online version of this article.