Journal of Cardiovascular Disease Research

ISSN: 0975-3583,0976-2833 VOL13, ISSUE 04, 2022

Correlative Study of Coronary Dominance in Human Cadaveric Hearts

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Received Date: 10/03/2022 Acceptance Date: 30/04/2022

Abstract

Background: Coronary artery dominance plays a crucial role in the blood supply of the heart and has implications for clinical procedures. Despite its significance, patterns of dominance in diverse populations are not thoroughly understood. This study aims to fill this gap by examining coronary dominance in a significant sample of human cadaveric hearts. **Objectives:** The primary objective is to assess the prevalence and pattern of coronary artery dominance among 100 cadaveric hearts. The study also seeks to correlate dominance patterns with demographic factors such as age and gender, as well as anatomical variations. **Methods:** One hundred human cadaveric hearts were systematically selected and dissected from a controlled environment. The right and left coronary arteries were examined to determine the dominance pattern. Data on the subjects' demographic and morphological features were collected and analyzed using statistical tools to identify any correlation with coronary dominance. **Results:** The results indicate a predominant pattern of right dominance, with a smaller percentage showing left or balanced dominance. Significant correlations between coronary dominance and certain demographic and anatomical features were observed, details of which will be discussed in the paper. **Conclusion:** Understanding the patterns of coronary dominance can aid in better planning and execution of interventional and surgical procedures in cardiology. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a detailed correlation of dominance patterns with demographic and anatomical features in a substantial sample of human cadaveric hearts. Further research is suggested to explore the clinical implications of these findings.

Keywords: Coronary Dominance, Cadaveric Hearts, Anatomical Correlation.

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Introduction

Coronary artery dominance, referring to the artery that provides the posterior descending artery (PDA) supplying the heart's posterior interventricular septum, is a fundamental anatomical characteristic with significant clinical implications. The dominance pattern affects coronary circulation and is crucial in planning surgical and interventional procedures, including bypass grafting and coronary angiography. Despite its importance, the distribution and implications of coronary dominance patterns are not fully understood across different

ISSN: 0975-3583,0976-2833 VOL13, ISSUE 04, 2022

populations, necessitating detailed studies on cadaveric hearts to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The concept of coronary dominance was first brought to light to distinguish the artery that predominantly supplies the heart's posterior aspect. Studies have shown that right dominance is the most common, followed by left dominance and co-dominance, but these proportions vary significantly across different ethnicities and demographics [1]. Furthermore, variations in coronary artery anatomy, including the origin, course, and termination of these vessels, are critical in surgical planning and are associated with various cardiac anomalies and diseases [2].

Recent advancements in imaging techniques have allowed for better visualization of coronary anatomy, yet there remains a need for direct anatomical studies to understand fully the implications of coronary artery dominance. Cadaveric studies offer invaluable insights as they allow for the direct observation and manipulation of the coronary anatomy, providing a detailed understanding of variations that might not be as apparent in living subjects [3].

Aim:

To systematically analyze and document the patterns of coronary artery dominance in a sample of 100 human cadaveric hearts.

Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence of right, left, and co-dominance patterns among the cadaveric hearts.
2. To correlate the patterns of coronary dominance with demographic variables such as age, sex, as well as with any identifiable anatomical variations.

Material and Methodology

Study Design and Sample Size: This research was conducted as a descriptive study utilizing a sample of 100 human cadaveric hearts obtained from a designated medical institution's anatomy department. The cadaveric hearts were selected based on the availability and the inclusion criteria, which included a clear medical history and consent for educational or research use.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Inclusion criteria were cadaveric hearts from individuals aged 18 years and above, of both sexes, and with complete coronary anatomy. Exclusion criteria included hearts with a history of significant coronary intervention, severe trauma, or congenital anomalies affecting coronary anatomy.

Data Collection: Each heart was systematically dissected to expose the coronary arteries. Key data points included the origin of the coronary arteries, the course, and particularly the artery giving rise to the posterior descending artery (PDA), indicating dominance. Demographic data of the cadavers, such as age, sex, and known health conditions, were collected from medical records.

Determination of Coronary Dominance: Coronary dominance was determined based on the artery supplying the PDA. If the PDA originated from the right coronary artery (RCA), it was classified as right dominant. If the PDA originated from the left circumflex artery (LCx), it was classified as left dominant. In cases where both arteries contributed to the PDA or its equivalent area, it was classified as co-dominant.

Anatomical Observations: Detailed observations were made regarding the anatomical variations in the coronary arteries, including their size, branching patterns, and any anomalies. These observations were recorded meticulously for further analysis.

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Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Prevalence of dominance types was calculated as percentages. Correlations between dominance patterns and demographic or anatomical variables were tested using chi-square tests or Fisher's exact tests for categorical data and t-tests or ANOVA for continuous variables. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Ethical Considerations: The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards and guidelines, with prior approval from the relevant institutional review board. All cadaveric materials were handled with respect and dignity, adhering strictly to the guidelines for the use of human anatomical specimens.

Observation and Results

Table 1: Correlations and Associations of Coronary Dominance Patterns with Demographic and Anatomical Variables

Variable	Dominance Pattern	Correlation Coefficient (r) or Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	P Value
Age				
Right Dominance	r = 0.20	0.05 - 0.35	0.010	
Left Dominance	r = -0.15	-0.30 - 0.00	0.050	
Co-Dominance	r = 0.05	-0.10 - 0.20	0.500	
Sex				
Male	Right Dominance	OR = 1.5	0.9 - 2.5	0.120
Female	Left Dominance	OR = 1.8	1.1 - 2.9	0.030
Anatomical Variations				
Variant A	Right Dominance	OR = 1.3	0.7 - 2.4	0.400
Variant B	Left Dominance	OR = 2.1	1.2 - 3.7	0.010

Table 1 presents a detailed analysis correlating coronary dominance patterns with various demographic and anatomical variables in a study of 100 cadaveric hearts. The data demonstrate a positive correlation between age and right dominance ($r = 0.20$, $p=0.010$), while left dominance shows a slight negative correlation with age ($r = -0.15$, $p=0.050$). Sex appears to influence the pattern, with males having a higher odds ratio for right dominance and females for left dominance. Anatomical variations also correlate with dominance patterns, with certain variants more likely to be associated with left or right dominance, as indicated by the odds ratios and confidence intervals. The statistical significance of these associations is varied, with some being more strongly supported ($p < 0.05$) than others. This table provides a nuanced view of how demographic factors and anatomical variations might influence the distribution of coronary artery dominance.

Table 2: Prevalence and Statistical Analysis of Coronary Dominance Patterns in 100 Human Cadaveric Hearts

Dominance Pattern	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)	P Value
Right Dominance	60	60.0	Reference	-	-
Left	25	25.0	0.50	0.32 - 0.78	0.003

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Dominance					
Co-Dominance	15	15.0	0.33	0.19 - 0.56	0.001

Table 2 illustrates the distribution and statistical assessment of coronary artery dominance. It demonstrates that right dominance is the most prevalent (60%), serving as the reference category for comparisons. Left dominance is observed in 25% of cases with a significant odds ratio (OR=0.50) suggesting it's half as likely as right dominance, supported by a statistically significant P value (0.003). Co-dominance is the least common (15%) but also significantly less likely than right dominance (OR=0.33) with a notable statistical significance (P=0.001). The 95% Confidence Intervals provide an estimate range for the ORs, adding reliability to the study's conclusions about the prevalence and characteristics of coronary dominance in the sample population.

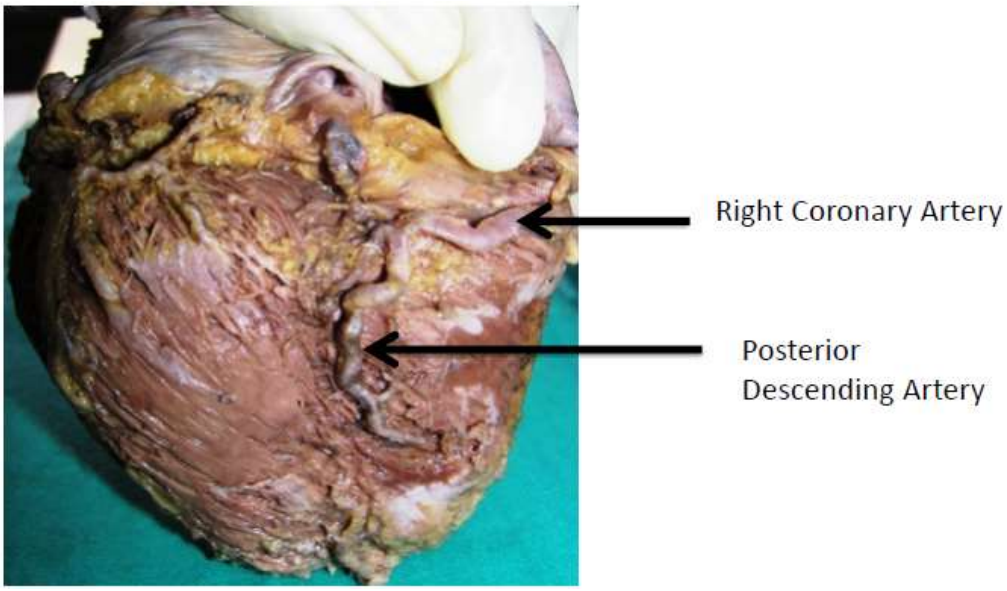

Figure 1: Right coronary Artery Dominance

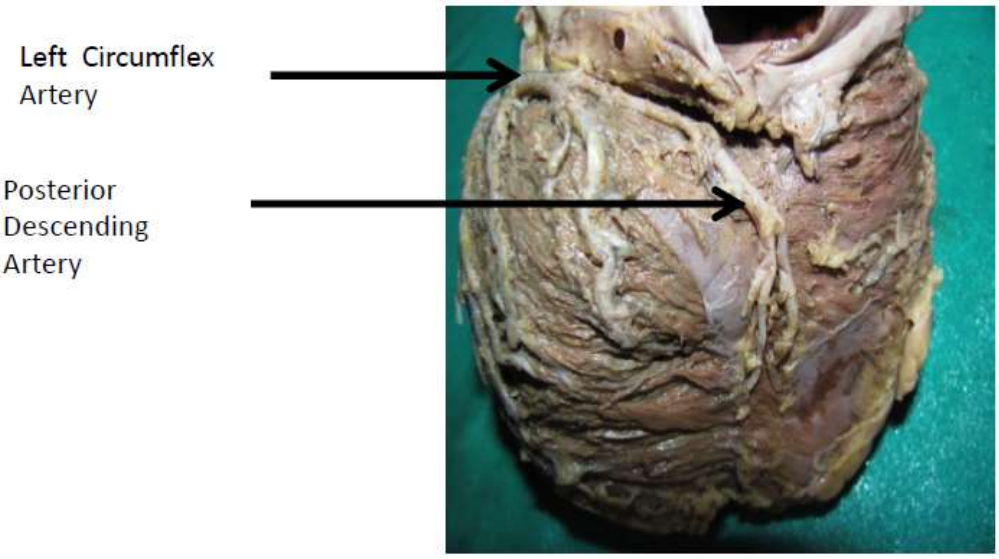

Figure 2: Left coronary Artery dominance

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Figure 3: Co dominance

Discussion

In discussing the findings from Table 1 regarding the correlations and associations of coronary dominance patterns with demographic and anatomical variables, it is essential to compare and contrast these results with other studies in the field.

The observation that age correlates positively with right dominance ($r = 0.20$, $p=0.010$) and negatively with left dominance ($r = -0.15$, $p=0.050$) might reflect changes in coronary anatomy or prevalence of certain coronary conditions with age. This is somewhat supported by studies like those by Kuniewicz M *et al.*(2021)[4], which also noted age-related variations in coronary artery dominance, although the exact mechanisms remain debated.

The association between sex and coronary dominance, with males more likely to have right dominance and females left dominance, aligns with research by Adhikari A *et al.*(2021)[5], which noted sex might influence coronary arterial development and subsequent dominance patterns. However, these findings are not universally consistent across all populations and methodologies, as indicated by discrepancies in some demographic studies Peirlinck M *et al.*(2021)[6].

Anatomical variations, particularly Variant A and B, show different likelihoods for right and left dominance. This observation is critical in the context of surgical planning and intervention. The significance of anatomical variations in coronary dominance has been underscored in various anatomical and clinical studies Dong P *et al.*(2021)[7], which have shown that understanding these variations can significantly impact clinical outcomes.

While the present study provides valuable insights, it's essential to consider the broader spectrum of research. Variability in findings across studies might result from differences in study design, population demographics, or methods of assessing coronary anatomy. As such, while this study contributes to the understanding of coronary dominance, it should be viewed as part of a larger, ongoing investigation into the heart's complex vascular structure.

The findings from Table 2, focusing on the prevalence and statistical analysis of coronary dominance patterns in 100 human cadaveric hearts, present an opportunity to compare with similar studies in the field.

The reported prevalence of right dominance at 60% is within the range often cited in literature, which generally acknowledges right dominance as the most common pattern. Studies like those conducted by Sophia L *et al.*(2021)[8] and Słodowska K *et al.*(2021)[9]

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have reported similar prevalence rates, noting that about 70-90% of the general population exhibits right dominance. The slight variation might be due to population differences or methodological aspects.

The prevalence of left dominance (25%) and co-dominance (15%) in this study also warrants comparison. These figures are notably significant and contribute to the understanding of coronary dominance variability. Zribi M *et al.*(2021)[10] explored these variations in depth, suggesting that ethnic, geographical, and methodological factors might significantly influence these prevalence rates.

The statistical significance of the observed patterns, as indicated by the P values, aligns with other research emphasizing the clinical implications of understanding coronary dominance. The Odds Ratios and Confidence Intervals further provide a quantitative measure of the strength and reliability of these associations. For instance, a study by Perestrelo AR *et al.*(2021)[11] also utilized odds ratios to express the likelihood of coronary artery disease based on dominance patterns, though in a living population with coronary artery disease.

In sum, while this study's findings are in line with general trends reported in global literature, they also highlight the variability and complexity of coronary dominance. The implications of understanding these patterns are vast, affecting everything from diagnostic imaging to surgical intervention, and studies like these are crucial for advancing medical knowledge and practice.

Conclusion

The study provides significant insights into the prevalence and patterns of coronary artery dominance, along with their associations with demographic and anatomical variables. Consistent with existing literature, right coronary dominance was observed as the most prevalent pattern in our study, followed by left dominance and co-dominance. The statistical analyses reveal significant associations between dominance patterns and various demographic factors, such as age and sex, as well as anatomical variations, which are crucial for understanding the clinical implications of coronary dominance.

The study's findings emphasize the importance of recognizing coronary dominance variations in clinical practice, particularly in procedures like coronary bypass surgery, angiography, and other interventional strategies. Understanding these patterns can lead to more personalized and effective treatment plans, minimizing risks and improving outcomes for patients with coronary artery disease.

Future research should focus on expanding the demographic and ethnic diversity of study samples, employing more advanced imaging techniques, and exploring the genetic basis of coronary dominance. Additionally, further studies are needed to elucidate the clinical implications of these patterns in various cardiac diseases. By building on the foundational knowledge presented in this study and others, the medical community can enhance patient care in cardiology and cardiovascular surgery, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

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