



Congenital Heart Conditions

Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions and casual conversation, including a discussion about stroke recovery experiences and the importance of support systems. Dr. Preeti Raghavan joined to address questions about congenital heart conditions, particularly patent foramen ovale (PFO) and its relation to stroke, while participants shared their personal experiences with various heart conditions and blood clotting issues. The conversation ended with discussions about medical testing for heart conditions and stroke recovery, including ataxia treatment, followed by announcements about upcoming presentations and schedule changes.

Summary

Patent Foramen Ovale and Stroke

Dr. Preeti Raghavan joined the meeting to follow up on questions about congenital heart disease, specifically addressing a hole in the heart and its relation to stroke. She clarified that a hole in the heart, known as a patent foramen ovale, is common and typically does not cause issues, but it can be checked if a stroke has no obvious cause. Preeti explained that strokes are mainly caused by blood clots, and in some cases, a large enough hole in the heart could allow clots to travel to the brain, affecting multiple areas. She noted that while most people with a hole in the heart do not require treatment, it might be considered if a stroke is linked to the defect.

Heart Conditions and Management Discussion

The group discussed heart conditions, with Kellee sharing her experience with atrial fibrillation and being on blood thinners, while Abbey mentioned having a



patent foramen ovale (PFO) that was closed after her stroke. Julie also revealed she has a PFO, which was an incidental finding after a misdiagnosed stroke, and she is now seeing a hematologist due to ongoing clotting issues. The conversation highlighted the importance of monitoring and managing heart conditions to prevent potential complications.

Blood Clotting and Heart Conditions

The group discussed health conditions related to blood clotting and heart issues. Julie and Josh shared their experiences with COVID-related strokes and being on blood thinners. Preeti explained what a hematologist does and clarified terms like PFO (Patent Foramen Ovale). The conversation touched on various medical tests, such as TEE and TTE, and the rarity of PFO being the cause of strokes. Layli and Stephanie asked questions about testing and conditions, and Preeti provided explanations.

Patent Foramen Ovale Testing

Preeti explained that an echocardiogram, including a transesophageal echo (TEE), can detect a patent foramen ovale (PFO), and described the bubble test, which involves injecting agitated saline to track microbubbles and diagnose a PFO. She clarified that while not all stroke survivors require a PFO evaluation, it is typically considered if no other cause is found. Preeti also clarified that cardiologists are the specialists who would order such tests, and Stephanie confirmed that cardiologists would handle PFO testing.

Stroke and Ataxia Recovery Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing stroke recovery and ataxia, with Dr. Preeti explaining the differences between typical stroke recovery and ataxia treatment. Michelle shared her experience with post-stroke movement issues,



and Layli provided encouragement about the potential for improvement in ataxia symptoms through physical therapy.