A 79 year-old male with history of hypertension and previous smoker, suffered an acute coronary syndrome with ST segment depression in leads V3-V6 and troponin I of 1.6. The echocardiogram showed preserved systolic function with apical hypokinesis. Coronary catheterization showed highly calcified long stenosis in the left anterior descending artery (LAD) in the proximal and mid segments (Figure 1, left) and non significant lesions in the circumflex and right coronary arteries. PCI was performed, using RA (Rotablator, Boston Scientific) with a 1.75 mm burr. Then the OCT system was introduced (ImageWire, LightLab Imaging) to the mid LAD and images were obtained during pull back at 2 mm/s with simultaneous injection of contrast through the guiding catheter (“non-occlusive” technique). The OCT (Figure 2) revealed large calcification (arrowheads), with areas of circumferential calcium (Figure 2C). The vessel lumen showed a uniform area with minimum diameter of 1.9 mm and multiple intimal microdissections (Figures 2A and B, arrows) produced by the Rotablator olive shaped burr. Two overlapping drug eluting stents (2.75x18 and 3x18 mm Xience V, Abbott Vascular) were implanted, with good angiographic result. The segment was studied again with OCT, showing good expansion and apposition of the stents (Figure 2D), with no plaque prolapse towards vessel lumen or edge dissections.

High resolution (10-20 µm) of the OCT images allow for accurate characterization of atherosclerotic lesions, which are classified as fibrous (hyperintense), lipidic (hypointense, with undefined edges), and calcified (hypointense, with well-defined borders). In addition, in the context of PCI, it allows the identification of...
Letters to the Editor

Figure 2. Optical coherence tomography following rotational atherectomy. A and B: calcified lesion (arrowheads) and multiple intimal microdissections (arrows). C: circumferential calcification area. D: result after stent implantation.

In the case in question, the OCT allowed evaluation of the effect of the rotational atherectomy in the calcified plaque: a uniform arterial lumen and multiple microdissections on the arterial wall. In addition, it was helpful to check the appropriate expansion and apposition of the stents, which can be problematic in heavily calcified lesions and are priority for the prevention of stent thrombosis.

Santiago Jiménez-Valero, Guillermo Galeote, Ángel Sánchez-Recalde, and Raúl Moreno
Departamento de Hemodinámica y Cardiología Intervencionista, Servicio de Cardiología, Hospital La Paz, Madrid, Spain

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