

Clinical Image

Clinical Case Image: Arteriovenous Malformation of the Upper Extremity

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This is a 60 year old woman with a congenital arteriovenous malformation (AVM) of the left upper extremity. The patient was complaining of chronic wounds and pain in the affected limb. Arteriovenous malformation is defined as an abnormal communication between a high-pressure arterial system and a low-pressure, low-resistance, high-capacity venous system. In the typical congenital AVM there are usually multiple, small connections resulting in deleterious effects on the limb such as venous hypertension,



secondary varicosities or phleboliths, and limb hypertrophy. If small and localized, AVMs of the limbs can be simply resected with pre-operative embolization. If more extensive, embolization and surgical debulking can be an effective palliative treatment. Occasionally if massive and the AVM has overtaken the majority of the substance of the limb the only surgical option can be amputation. In this case, surgical treatment was offered but the patient declined and opted for conservative measures.