

# Physician's Medical/Legal Consultants of Texas LLC

Physicians Helping Attorneys Helping People™

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## Newsletter

October 2022

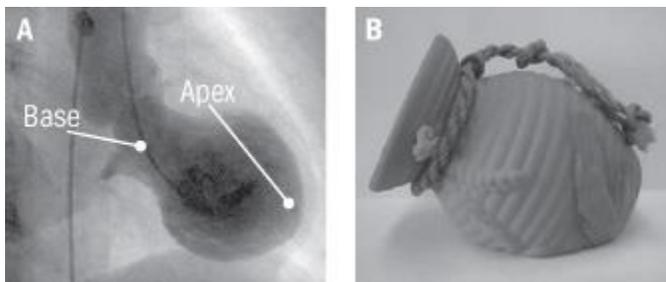
### This Month's Question:

Can acute physical or emotional stress (for example, from a motor vehicle crash or work accident) cause congestive failure in persons without pre-existing cardiac disease, even when there is no direct trauma to the heart?

### Our Response:

One of the more interesting phenomena in cardiovascular medicine that was described for the first time and was given its name by a Japanese cardiologist in 1990 ---“Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy”. A takotsubo is a narrow-necked pot with a globular base, and it has been used for centuries by Japanese fishermen to trap octopus, a popular food in Japan (figure).

Apical ballooning and the takotsubo



Dr. Sato saw the resemblance between the takotsubo pot and the appearance of the heart --specifically its main pumping chamber, the left ventricle – in a puzzling group of patients.

The common denominator in their stories was that in virtually every case, these patients had recently experienced significant psychological trauma, though not direct trauma to the heart.

These people, most of them women and all without cardiac histories, presented like typical heart attack patients but had no coronary blockages on cardiac catheterization. They had the typical chest pain and ECG changes, but their coronary arteries were “clean”.

What they DID have, however, was a deformity of the left ventricle – the main pumping chamber of the heart -- that made it look like the octopus trapping pot. In about 20 percent of the cases, the dysfunction of the heart muscle was enough to cause overt heart failure symptoms.

Much research has gone into the mechanism by which the heart muscle is damaged by stress without direct trauma. Suffice it to say that the exact mechanism, no doubt biochemical, remains to be discovered. Nevertheless, the medical literature clearly supports a causal link between psychologically traumatic events and this form of heart damage.

The condition is most often transient and most who suffer it recover eventually. Despite being sometimes referred to as “broken heart syndrome”, it is rarely fatal. Even so, many patients need acute therapy directed at heart failure, and all patients with Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy require follow up with a cardiac specialist until resolution is complete, a process that generally takes months.

Obviously, this bizarre but not uncommon condition can result in increased settlement demands if the psychological trauma is caused by a motor vehicle crash or other traumatic event. If a client is experiencing shortness of breath and/or chest pain following a motor vehicle crash, even one that did not cause direct trauma to the chest, the diagnosis of Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy should be considered and the appropriate cardiac evaluation is not only justified, but is in fact also highly recommended in the medical literature.

## Let Us Know How We Can Help You

- Review of Case Validity and Value
- Medical Summary Reports with Medical Opinions for Demand Letters
- Help with Strategies to Promote Medical Theories
- Interpretation of Meaning, or lack thereof, of Medical Reports & Records
- Independent Record Reviews
- Observation of IME's and IME Rebuttal Reports when appropriate
- Referral to Appropriate Medical Experts
- Medical Research with Delivery of Medical Journal Articles
- Facilitation of Communication with Clients, Families, Professionals and Service & Governmental Agencies
- Medical Case Coordination
- Liaison & Communication with Treating Doctors
- Reports Answering Specific Medical Questions
- Standard of Care Reviews

As you know, **we have purposefully kept our fees very low; a fraction of usual medical expert fees** allowing you the opportunity to have us review your cases early in your representation while controlling your expenses.

**CONTACT US for Information or our Fee Schedule**

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**P.S. ---Please pass this Newsletter along to your colleagues if you found it helpful.**

