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Cardiologist leverages latest technology to safely remove blood clots

DALTON, Ga. (February 11, 2025) – Blood clot removal, technically known as a thrombectomy, can be intricate and complex. Thanks to the latest technology available at Hamilton Medical Center, Sonny Achtchi, DO, recently faced a particularly challenging case, performing yet another successful procedure, showcasing both his expertise and the power of modern medical advancements.

Maria Sanchez, who was already facing the daunting reality of non-smoking related metastatic lung cancer, was admitted to Hamilton Medical Center and diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a condition involving a blood clot forming in a deep vein, most often in the legs.

“I started with pain in different areas of my feet,” Sanchez explained, “and I noticed black lines in my veins. I thought it might be normal, but then the pain got worse, my foot became swollen, and it bothered me to do my daily activities. They did an ultrasound and told me I had blood clots.”

The first course of action included the use of blood thinners and eventually the insertion of a filter into a particular vein to prevent blood clots from spreading. However, the clot continued to extend into both of her legs. This resulted in swelling and pain in the patient’s legs, affecting her mobility and ability to stand for any significant length of time.

The patient’s doctor referred her to Achtchi, who suggested the patient receive a CT scan. After examining the scan, Achtchi saw clots were still present in Sanchez’s blood.

Not to be deterred, Achtchi decided to use the ClotTrier XL system in an effort to remove the clots. No stranger to the ClotTrier and other similar procedures, Achtchi remained confident in his choice. Although, he said, the safety and results of the ClotTrier are similar to other mechanical thrombectomy devices, his experience finds the procedure faster and more complete with the ability to remove most to all of both fresh and older clots.

“The Clotriever XL allows for a single-session, precise treatment with rapid improvement in symptoms for the patients,” said Achtchi.

The ClotTrier system begins with a small, noninvasive incision followed by a small tube being inserted into the vein. A catheter is delivered through the tube to the location of the clot, allowing the physician to capture and remove it. This is done while the patient is under mild sedation and without the use of potentially risky clot-buster drugs.

“I felt confident before the procedure,” Sanchez recalled. “Dr. Achtchi spoke with me and explained everything in detail, answering all my questions. He’s very attentive and really took the time to find the right words so I could understand everything that was happening to me.”

With the positive completion of the procedure, Achtchi and his team were given the distinction of being the first in the area to remove blood clots using the ClotTrier XL system. Although the patient did require some stenting of the veins due to scar tissue from prior clots that could not be entirely removed, the overall results were excellent, according to Achtchi.

After experiencing some notable discomfort during the procedure and a few hours after, she was discharged the following morning.

“Two days after the surgery, I was already walking normally without pain or discomfort,” Sanchez said. “My feet were slightly swollen, but they didn’t hurt or bother me at all. My life is completely normal now, just like before. I can do everything I want, and they recommended that I walk as much as possible.”

The patient continues experiencing a greatly improved quality of life and receives periodic follow ups. She says she would enthusiastically recommend the ClotTrier XL system procedure to anyone dealing with a similar issue.

“Devices like this are rapidly becoming the standard of care for this disease based on safety and efficacy,” Achtchi said. “This is a very exciting space in medicine, allowing safe and effective treatment for a disease that previously had poor options and poor outcomes.”

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Photo: Sonny Achtchi, DO