

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Idiopathic dilated cardiomyopathy in children: Prognostic indicators

Çocuklarda idiyopatik dilate kardiyomyopati: Prognostik belirteçler

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a disorder featuring left ventricular dysfunction, heart failure, and a poor prognosis. The etiology is still unclear, despite diagnostic and therapeutic developments. This study was an evaluation of factors affecting the life span of a group of idiopathic DCM patients.

Methods: A total of 79 patients from between October 2005 and October 2017 with a diagnosis of idiopathic DCM were evaluated retrospectively. Demographic characteristics, clinical information, left ventricular function, treatment, and follow-up of the patients were reviewed based on hospital records. Age, gender, parental consanguinity, cardiomegaly on telecardiography, reduced ejection fraction (EF) and shortening fraction (SF), degree of mitral regurgitation, and intracardiac thrombosis were determined to affect prognosis.

Results: The patients were aged 20±60 months, and the male/female ratio was 1.02/1. The patients most frequently presented with heart failure signs and symptoms (n=59, 74.7%). The most common physical examination findings were a murmur (n=53, 67.1%) and tachycardia (n=48, 60.8%). Cardiomegaly was observed on telecardiography in 73.4% of the patients. The EF and SF values were 35.7±12.6% and 17.3±6.5%, respectively. In all, 42 (53.2%) patients had mitral regurgitation of grade 2 or higher. The duration of follow-up was between 1 and 156 months (20±34.9 months). Intracardiac thrombosis was detected in 4 (5.1%) patients. The mortality rate was 36.7%. When the prognostic factors were compared according to survival time, it was determined that survival was reduced in cases of parental consanguinity, low EF, and cardiomegaly.

Conclusion: The most important negative markers affecting the length of survival of DCM patients were parental consanguinity, cardiomegaly detected on telecardiography, and a reduced EF level.

ÖZET

Amaç: Dilate kardiyomyopati (DKM) sol ventrikül işlevlerinde bozukluk ve kalp yetersizliği ile seyreden ve prognozu kötü olan bir hastalıktır. Tanısal ve terapötik gelişmelere rağmen etioloji hala bilinmemektedir. Çalışmamızda idiyopatik DKM tanısıyla izlenen hastalarımızın yaşam süresini etkileyen faktörleri değerlendirmek istedik.

Yöntemler: Ekim 2005–Ekim 2017 tarihleri arasında idiyopatik DKM tanısı konulan 79 hasta geriye dönük olarak değerlendirildi. Hastaların demografik özellikleri, klinik bilgileri, sol ventrikül fonksiyonları, tedavi ve izlemleri hastane kayıtlarından incelendi. Prognoza etki edebilecek faktörlerden; semptomların başlama yaşı, cinsiyet, anne-baba akrabalığı, telekardiyogramda kardiyomegali varlığı, eko-kardiyografide azalmış ejeksiyon fraksiyonu (EF), kısalma fraksiyonu (KF), mitral yetersizlik derecesi ve intrakardiyak tromboz gelişimi değerlendirildi.

Bulgular: Hastaların yaşları 20±60 ay, erkek/kız oranı ise 1.02/1 idi. Hastaların en sık kalp yetersizliği semptom ve bulguları (n=59, %74.7) ile başvurduğu görüldü. En sık görülen fizik muayene bulgusu üfürüm (n=53, %67.1) ve taşikardi (n=48, %60.8) idi. Olguların %73.4'ünde telekardiyografide kardiyomegali vardı. Ekokardiyografi değerlendirmesinde EF ve KF değerleri sırasıyla %35.7±12.6 ve %17.3±6.5 iken 42 (%53.2) hastada 2. derece ve üzerinde mitral yetersizlik olduğu görüldü. İzlem süresi 20±38.1 (1–156) ay idi. Dört olguda (%5.1) intrakardiyak tromboz saptandı. Mortalite oranı %36.7 olarak bulundu. Sağ kalım sürelerine göre prognostik faktörlere bakıldığında; anne baba arasında akrabalık olması, EF ve telekardiyografide kardiyomegali olmasının sağkalım süresini anlamlı derecede kısalttığı görüldü.

Sonuç: Anne baba arasında akrabalık olması, tanı anında telekardiyografide kardiyomegali olması ve EF değerlerinin düşük olması DKM hastalarında sağkalım sürelerini etkileyen en önemli belirteçlerdir.

Received: 11.12.2017 Accepted: 20.09.2018

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Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is myocardial disease characterized by dilated left ventricular and systolic dysfunction, often coursing with congestive heart failure. The five-year mortality rate or heart transplantation requirement of these patients was reported as 46%.^[1] It is the most common type of cardiomyopathy seen in children. The most common cause of DCM is idiopathic and followed by myocarditis. In the United States, annual the incidence of cardiomyopathy in the 0-18 age group is 1.13 per 100,000, and DCMs consist of half of these cases. In children aged under one year, the expected annual incidence of DCM is 4 per 100,000 children.^[2] In epidemiological studies, the incidence in children was found to be 0.57–0.73/100,000.^[3,4]

The prognosis of patients is in a wide spectrum ranging between sudden improvement and severe heart failure.^[3] Due to the fact that drug treatment is not very effective, one third of the patients lead a mortal course or are candidates for heart transplantation.^[4]

The most frequency cause of heart transplantation in children is DCM.^[5] Early diagnosis and treatment of DCM prevent or delay the development of heart failure. Intracardiac thrombosis is a common complication and a major cause of morbidity and mortality. The incidence of intracardiac thrombosis was found to be between 4–16% in patients with DCM.^[6-9] In this study we wanted to investigate the prognostic factors in patients with DCM.

METHODS

In our study, 79 patients with idiopathic DCM who were followed between October 2005 and October 2017 were evaluated retrospectively. The diagnosis of DCM was based on detection of expansion of ventricles and increase in left ventricular wall thickness along with systolic dysfunction detected in two-dimensional echocardiography in accordance with the recommendation of 2006 American Heart Association.^[10] Secondary causes of DCM (infections, arrhythmias, endocrine diseases, neuromuscular diseases, rheumatologic and immunological diseases, nutritional deficiencies, conditions leading to ischemia, toxins and systemic diseases) were excluded.

Age and gender distribution, admission symptoms, physical examination, electrocardiography (ECG),

telecardiography, echocardiography findings and prognosis were evaluated.

The age of onset of symptoms (<2 years and, ≥2 years), gender, consanguinity between parents, presence of cardiomegaly in the telecardiogram (0.60 in the neonatal period, 0.55 in the infancy and 0.50 in children) The effects of ejection fraction (EF) and shortening fraction (CF) measurements, left ventricular end-diastolic diameter (LVEDD), and intracardiac thrombosis on prognosis were investigated. The severity of mitral insufficiency was graded based on the extension of mitral regurgitation jet into left atrium as: Grade 1 <15%; Grade 2, 15–30%; Grade 3, 35–50%, and Grade 4, >50% grade 4 mitral regurgitation.^[11] The survival of the patients were evaluated from the time of diagnosis.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis of the patients' data was performed with "SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA" program. "Survival (Therneau, 2015) package in R Studio" was used to draw the Kaplan-Meier curve. Mean ± standard deviation (SD) was used as descriptive statistics. P value <0.05 was considered significant. The survival times of the patients were evaluated using Kaplan-Meier method and Cox regression analysis. According to single-variable Cox regression results, variables with p<0.25 were selected as candidates for multiple Cox regression modeling.

RESULTS

The median age of 79 patients diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy was 20 months (10 days–198 months) while 40 (50.6%) patients were male and 39 (49.4%) of them were female. Forty-four (55.7%) patients were under, and 35 (44.3%) patients above two years of age Heart failure symptoms and signs were the most common cause of admission in both age groups (n=53, 67.1%). The most common physical examination findings were 2–3/6 degree systolic murmur heard at apical localization (n=53, 67.1%) and tachycardia (n=48, 60.4%). In 10 (12.6%) patients, In 30 (38%) patients consanguinity was observed between the parents including 10 patients whose parents. were first-degree relatives.

Abbreviations:

| | |
|-------|---|
| DCM | Dilated cardiomyopathy |
| ECG | Eşlectrocardiography |
| EF | Ejection fraction |
| LVEDD | Left ventricular end-diastolic diameter |
| SF | Shortening fraction |

Electrocardiographic changes were detected in 39 (49.4%) patients and defined as left ventricular hypertrophy in 27 (69.2%), ST-T changes in 8 (20.5%), and arrhythmia in 4 (10.3%) patients.

Of 4 patients with arrhythmia, 1 had supraventricular tachycardia and 3 had rarely seen ventricular extrasystoles. In 58 (73.4%) patients, cardiomegaly was present in the telecardiography. In echocardiographic examination, values for LVEDD, EF and SF were found as 41.7 ± 1.3 mm, $35.7 \pm 1.3\%$ and 17.3 ± 6.5 , respectively. Patients with mitral regurgitation were examined in groups of Grades <2 . and ≥ 2 . Forty-two (53.2%) had ≥ 2 Grade, and 37 (46.8%) patients had Grade <2 . mitral regurgitation. According to age groups of <2 and >2 years; EF values were $36.9 \pm 11.8\%$ vs $34.2 \pm 13.5\%$, and SF values were $17.7 \pm 5.9\%$ vs $16.9 \pm 7.3\%$, respectively.

The EF and SF values of the patients at the time of admission and at the end of the follow-up period are shown in Table 1. In 4 (5.1%) patients, intracardiac thrombosis was detected which occurred in 3 patients at the time of their first admission and in 1 patient 2 months after the diagnosis (despite the antiaggregant prophylaxis).

EF and SF values of these patients were $25.5 \pm 5.9\%$ and 12.2 ± 2.6 , respectively. Intracardiac thrombosis was seen in the left ventricle in four, and in the right ventricle in one patient. Two patients were treated with enoxaparin, one patient with heparin and the other one with tissue plasmin activator. None of the patients had a hematologic disorder that could lead to an arrhythmia or procoagulant condition. Demographic, clinical and echocardiographic features of the patients with thrombosis are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Echocardiographic findings of the patients at admission, and at the end of the follow-up period

| | <2 years (% \pm SD) | | ≥ 2 years (% \pm SD) | | All patients (% \pm SD) | |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| | EF | SF | EF | SF | EF | SF |
| At admission | 36.9 ± 11.8 | 17.7 ± 5.9 | 34.2 ± 13.5 | 16.9 ± 7.3 | 35.7 ± 1.3 | 17.3 ± 6.5 |
| End of follow-up | 50.1 ± 21.1 | 26.2 ± 12.7 | 46.5 ± 17.7 | 24.7 ± 11 | 48.5 ± 1.9 | 25.5 ± 1.2 |

EF: ejection fraction; SF: Shortening fraction.

Table 2. Characteristic features of the patients with thrombosis

| | Patient no | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Age at diagnosis (year) | 4.5 | 15 | 2 | 11 |
| Gender | Male | Male | Male | Female |
| Development of thrombosis | At the time of diagnosis | At the time of diagnosis | 2 months | At the time of diagnosis |
| Ejection fraction (%) | 20 | 24 | 20 | 34 |
| Shortening fraction (%) | 10 | 12 | 10 | 16 |
| Left ventricular end-diastolic diameter (mm) | 45 | 57 | 51 | 55 |
| Location of the thrombus | LV (n=2), RV (n=1) | LV | LV | LV |
| Dimensions of the thrombus (mm) | 33x14, 15x8, 4x4 | 35x24 | 40x25 | 8x8 |
| Prescribed treatment | Heparin | Enoxaparinrine | t-PA | Enoxaparinrine |
| Duration of treatment (day) | 11 | 30 | 1 | 14 |
| Resolution | Complete | Part (4x4) | Died | Complete |
| Embolism | + | - | - | - |

LV: Left ventricle; RV: Right ventricle; tPA: Plasminogen activator tissue plasminogen activator.

Table 3. Distribution of survived, and exited patients

| | Number of survived patients (%) | Number of exited patients (%) |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Age | | |
| <2 years | 30 (68.2) | 14 (31.8) |
| ≥2 years | 20 (57.1) | 15 (42.9) |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 23 (59) | 16 (41) |
| Male | 27 (67.5) | 13 (32.5) |
| Consanguinity | | |
| No | 37 (75.5) | 12 (24.5) |
| Yes | 13 (43.3) | 17 (56.7) |
| Electrographic changes | | |
| No | 28 (70) | 12 (30) |
| Yes | 22 (56.5) | 17 (43.5) |
| Cardiomegaly detected on telecardiograms | | |
| No | 19 (90.5) | 2 (9.5) |
| Yes | 31 (53.4) | 27 (46.6) |
| Intracardiac thrombosis | | |
| No | 47 (62.7) | 28 (37.3) |
| Yes | 3 (7.5) | 1 (2.5) |
| Mitral regurgitation | | |
| Grade ≥2 | 23 (34.5) | 19 (65.5) |
| Grade <2 | 27 (65.5) | 10 (34.5) |

The median follow-up period was 20 months (1–156) and 29 patients (36.7%) died during follow-up. Four (5.06%) patients underwent heart transplantation.

Fourteen patients (31.8%) aged <2 years and 15 (42.9%) patients aged ≥2 years exited. The mortality rate was found to be higher in female patients (n=16, 41%) than in male patients (n=13, 32.5%). Seventeen (56.7%) patients with and 12 (24.5%) patients without consanguineous parents exited. Twenty-seven (46.6%) patients with 2 (9.5%) patients without cardiomegaly as detected on telecardiography did not survive.

The mortality rate was 65.5% (n=19) in patients with mitral regurgitation at grade 2 and above (Table 3). EF values of living and deceased patients were 38.6±12.6% and 30.7±11.1, respectively, while SF values were 18.6±6.7% and 15±5.6, respectively.

Thirty-seven patients (46.8%) with Grade 1 and 42 (53.2%) cases with Grade ≥2 had mitral regurgitation. Of the 4 patients with thrombosis, 2 had Grade 2 and 1 had Grade I mitral regurgitation, while the fourth patient had no mitral regurgitation. The survival times of the patients were evaluated with Cox regression method and Kaplan-Meier method. Variables within a significance level of p<0.25 in univariate Cox regression analysis were selected as candidate risk factors considering that they may have significance in multivariate Cox proportional hazard regression analysis.

A retrospective elimination process was performed with multiple analysis. Three variables were left; Parental consanguinity (p=0.003), cardiomegaly in telecardiography (p=0.085) and low EF value (p=0.088) were found to be the most important factors in determining survival (Table 4). The presence of cardiomegaly in the telecardiography and low EF were clinically significant, although not statistically significant, on survival. Because the risk of death was 3.67 times higher in patients with cardiomegaly, each 1 unit EF decreased the risk of death by 1.03 times. The survival curves of the patients are shown in Figure 1–3.

Categorical risk factors were evaluated by Kaplan-Meier survival analysis using Log-Rank test (Table 5). Numerical variables were evaluated by the proportional hazard regression method of univariate Cox analysis (Table 6).

DISCUSSION

The most frequent symptoms and signs of dilated cardiomyopathy are dyspnea, exercise intolerance, syncope, tachypnea, tachycardia and hepatomegaly.^[12] Talierci et al.^[13] found that heart failure was the most common (92%) finding in 24 patients with a mean age of two years.

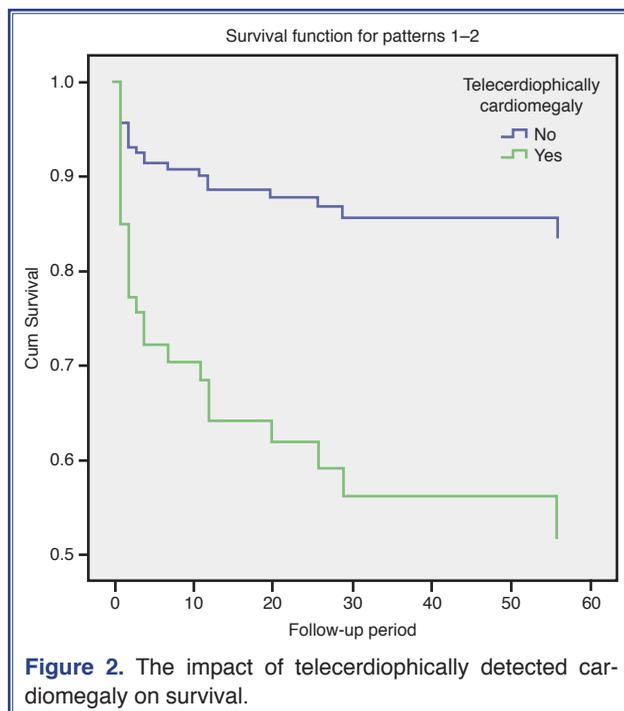
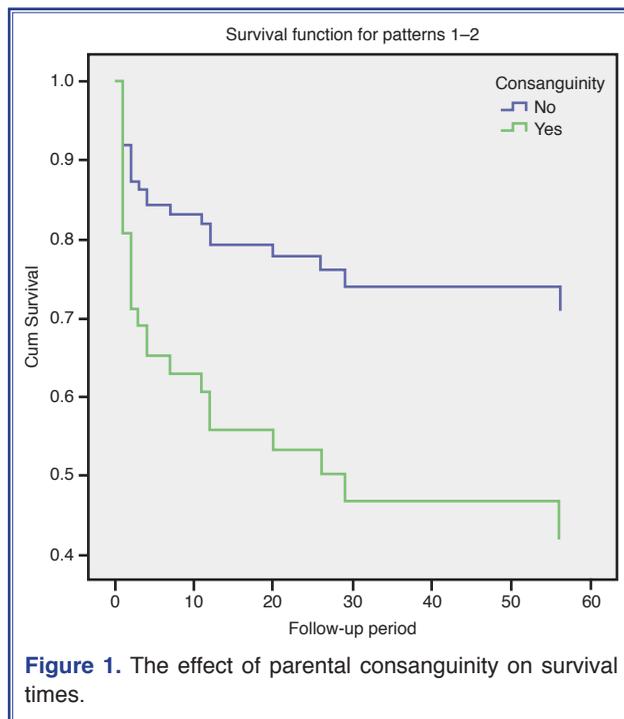
In a study by Oh et al.^[14] it was seen that the patients were admitted most frequently (67.1%) with signs and symptoms of heart failure. We found that 73.4% of our patients had cardiomegaly as detected in telecardiography.

In many studies, patients with a family history of CDM have been evaluated and it has been shown that patients have one or more relatives with CDM.^[15–18] Towbin et al.^[1] reported the best 5-year survival rate of 94% in patients with family history of CDM.

Table 4. Effects of risk factors on prognosis

| | Variable | B | SE | Z | P | HR | 95% CI | |
|--------|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Step 1 | Age | 0.399 | 0.412 | 0.936 | 0.333 | 1.49 | 0.664 | 3.343 |
| | Gender | 0.14 | 0.402 | 0.122 | 0.727 | 1.15 | 0.524 | 2.527 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.943 | 0.442 | 4.988 | 0.026 | 2.568 | 1.122 | 5.87 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.287 | 0.782 | 2.709 | 0.1 | 3.62 | 0.782 | 16.75 |
| | Grade of mitral regurgitation | 0.105 | 0.551 | 0.036 | 0.849 | 1.111 | 0.377 | 3.269 |
| | Intracardiac thrombus | -0.124 | 1.062 | 0.014 | 0.907 | 0.884 | 0.11 | 7.078 |
| | Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | -0.007 | 0.017 | 0.184 | 0.668 | 0.993 | 0.96 | 1.026 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.021 | 0.065 | 0.102 | 0.749 | 0.979 | 0.862 | 1.113 |
| | Shortening fraction | -0.012 | 0.126 | 0.01 | 0.921 | 0.988 | 0.772 | 1.263 |
| Step 2 | Age | 0.395 | 0.41 | 0.925 | 0.336 | 1.484 | 0.664 | 3.316 |
| | Gender | 0.146 | 0.397 | 0.134 | 0.714 | 1.157 | 0.531 | 2.521 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.926 | 0.383 | 5.85 | 0.016 | 2.523 | 1.192 | 5.34 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.302 | 0.766 | 2.886 | 0.089 | 3.677 | 0.819 | 16.51 |
| | Grade of mitral regurgitation | 0.094 | 0.538 | 0.03 | 0.862 | 1.098 | 0.383 | 3.15 |
| | Intracardiac thrombus | -0.112 | 1.055 | 0.011 | 0.915 | 0.894 | 0.113 | 7.07 |
| | Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | -0.007 | 0.017 | 0.176 | 0.675 | 0.993 | 0.961 | 1.026 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.027 | 0.021 | 1.719 | 0.19 | 0.973 | 0.973 | 1.013 |
| | Shortening fraction | -0.012 | 0.126 | 0.01 | 0.921 | 0.988 | 0.772 | 1.263 |
| Step 3 | Age | 0.39 | 0.41 | 0.913 | 0.339 | 1.479 | 0.663 | 3.3 |
| | Gender | 0.143 | 0.397 | 0.131 | 0.718 | 1.154 | 0.530 | 2.51 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.927 | 0.382 | 5.885 | 0.015 | 2.528 | 1.195 | 5.35 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.3 | 0.766 | 2.879 | 0.09 | 3.67 | 0.817 | 16.46 |
| | Grade of mitral regurgitation | 0.08 | 0.523 | 0.024 | 0.878 | 1.084 | 0.388 | 3.02 |
| | Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | -0.007 | 0.017 | 0.178 | 0.682 | 0.993 | 0.961 | 1.026 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.027 | 0.02 | 1.855 | 0.173 | 0.973 | 0.935 | 1.012 |
| | Shortening fraction | -0.012 | 0.126 | 0.01 | 0.921 | 0.988 | 0.772 | 1.263 |
| | Grade of mitral regurgitation | 0.105 | 0.551 | 0.036 | 0.849 | 1.111 | 0.377 | 3.269 |
| Step 4 | Age | 0.39 | 0.41 | 0.91 | 0.34 | 1.478 | 0.663 | 3.29 |
| | Gender | 0.133 | 0.391 | 0.116 | 0.734 | 1.142 | 0.531 | 2.458 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.934 | 0.379 | 6.062 | 0.014 | 2.545 | 1.21 | 5.355 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.302 | 0.765 | 2.897 | 0.089 | 3.677 | 0.821 | 16.47 |
| | Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | -0.006 | 0.016 | 0.146 | 0.703 | 0.994 | 0.963 | 1.026 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.029 | 0.017 | 3.022 | 0.082 | 0.971 | 0.940 | 1.004 |
| | Shortening fraction | -0.012 | 0.126 | 0.01 | 0.921 | 0.988 | 0.772 | 1.263 |
| Step 5 | Age | 0.388 | 0.412 | 0.888 | 0.346 | 1.474 | 0.658 | 3.304 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.938 | 0.379 | 6.117 | 0.013 | 2.555 | 1.215 | 5.375 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.266 | 0.758 | 2.789 | 0.095 | 3.547 | 0.803 | 15.667 |
| | Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | -0.006 | 0.016 | 0.119 | 0.730 | 0.994 | 0.963 | 1.027 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.028 | 0.016 | 2.922 | 0.087 | 0.972 | 0.942 | 1.004 |
| Step 6 | Age | 0.329 | 0.375 | 0.769 | 0.38 | 1.389 | 0.666 | 2.896 |
| | Consanguinity | 0.942 | 0.379 | 6.163 | 0.013 | 2.564 | 1.219 | 5.393 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.272 | 0.757 | 2.825 | 0.093 | 3.567 | 0.810 | 15.716 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.028 | 0.017 | 2.776 | 0.096 | 0.973 | 0.942 | 1.005 |
| Step 7 | Consanguinity | 0.926 | 0.379 | 5.978 | 0.014 | 2.523 | 1.202 | 5.299 |
| | Cardiomegaly in telecardiogram | 1.300 | 0.755 | 2.962 | 0.085 | 3.669 | 0.835 | 16.126 |
| | Ejection fraction | -0.028 | 0.017 | 2.904 | 0.088 | 0.972 | 0.941 | 1.004 |

In our study, none of our patients had a family history of DCM. In our country, consanguineous marriages are still an important problem. The rate of kinship of parents of our patients was found to be 38 percent. Family members were evaluated echocardiographically in our study and no history of heart disease was reported.



However, in our country where the rate of consanguineous marriages is high, we think that family members should have detailed cardiological/echocardiographic examination and genetic studies if necessary.

The incidence of intracardiac thrombosis in children with dilated cardiomyopathy has been reported as 4–16% in various studies.^[7,19,20] We found its incidence as 5.1% in our study population.

The incidence of thrombosis has been shown to increase up to 43–57% in autopsy studies.^[20–22]

When the effect of age on prognosis is evaluated, there are different results in the literature. Carvalho et al.^[23] reported a worse prognosis in patients over two years of age. In the study performed by Kim et al.,^[24] age was not found to have an effect on prognosis. In our study, we found that age did not have any effect on mortality.

The relationship between gender of the patients and prognosis in patients with CDM has been evaluated, and in some studies female, in others, male gender was reported to be associated with poor prognosis.^[15,25] In our study we have not detected any effect of gender on prognosis.

Cardiomegaly and pulmonary edema are the most common findings in telecardiogram of patients with dilated cardiomyopathy.^[26] Increased cardiothoracic ratio is predictive of mortality.^[27] In our study, it was found to be effective on mortality.

Taliercio et al.^[13] reported lack of any relationship between left ventricular function and prognosis. Zecchin et al.^[28] reported that patients with a longer LVEDD, who did not use beta-blockers and had a EF of less than 30% had a poor prognosis. McMahon et al.^[29] reported a poorer prognosis for patients with

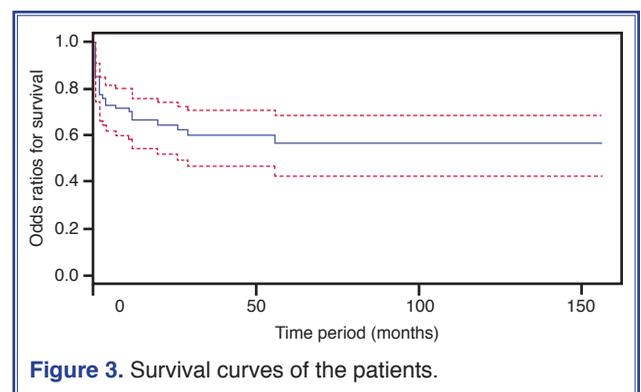


Table 5. Evaluation of categorical risk factors with Kaplan-Meier survival analysis using Log-rank test

| | Median survival times (month) | CI (95%) | | Log-Rank | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|----------|
| | | Lower | Upper | Chi | <i>p</i> |
| Age | | | | | |
| <2 | 92.3 | 72.6 | 112 | 1.58 | 0.209 |
| >2 | 76.8 | 47.1 | 106.5 | | |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Female | 87 | 61.3 | 112.6 | 0.56 | 0.45 |
| Male | 74.5 | 56.5 | 92.5 | | |
| Consanguinity | | | | | |
| No | 115.7 | 96.6 | 134.8 | 10.85 | 0.001 |
| Yes | 41.2 | 18.4 | 64 | | |

Table 6. Evaluation of numerical variables presumptively effective on survival rates using univariate Cox proportional hazards regression analysis

| | Hazard Ratio | CI (95%) | | Wald | <i>p</i> |
|--|--------------|----------|-------|------|----------|
| | | Lower | Upper | | |
| Age | 1.56 | 0.75 | 3.24 | 1.43 | 0.23 |
| Left ventricular enddiastolic diameter | 1.01 | 0.98 | 1.04 | 0.38 | 0.537 |
| Ejection fraction | 0.96 | 0.93 | 0.99 | 6.73 | 0.009 |
| Shortening fraction | 0.93 | 0.88 | 0.99 | 5.05 | 0.025 |

thicker left ventricular posterior wall, longer LVEDD and low EF.

We found that EF and SF values of the deceased patients were significantly lower. However, we found no significant difference in the mortality rates in patients with a mortal course and a wider LVEDD compared with the survivors.

Another factor effective on prognosis is the development of intracardiac thrombosis.

In our study, we found that the prognosis of our patients with intracardiac thrombosis was not statistically worse. We thought that this result may be related to our limited number of patients. In the etiology of intracardiac thrombosis in children lower cardiac output, arrhythmia, and hematological diseases which result in hypercapulopathy are shown as three main etiologic factors.^[6,19,30]

Our patients did not have an etiologic factor or arrhythmia that could cause hypercoagulopathy. There-

fore, it was thought that thrombosis was caused by low cardiac output, that is, stasis in blood flow. In studies performed especially in adult patients, it was observed that development of thrombosis was less frequent in patients with mitral regurgitation which was explained by the prevention of blood stasis in mitral regurgitation.^[8,31,32] However, in another study, such a relationship could not be found.^[19] Similarly, in our study, development of thrombosis was observed in our patients despite the presence of second and third degree mitral insufficiency. Any relationship between regurgitation and thrombosis could not be found. In pediatric patients with DCM, intracardiac thrombus is frequently localized in the left ventricle as was the case with our patients. Though rarely development of thrombosis has been reported in other cardiac chambers.^[6,7,19,30]

Treatment of Intracardiac thrombosis is treated via medical [thrombolytic, anticoagulant] or surgical methods.^[33,34]

There is no precise information about the choice of treatment options in children. Medical treatment has a tendency to treat small thromboembolism. However, as is shown, morphology of the thrombi has not an effective factor on the risk of embolism.^[30] If a patient with CDM has SF less than 20%, then it is recommended to start intensive anticoagulant therapy if the patient has a history of stroke and/or if an intracardiac thrombus is observed.^[7,19]

Günthard et al.^[6] suggested initiation of intravenous heparin or oral anticoagulant therapy when an intracardiac thrombus is observed. CDM patients with large thrombi need thrombolytic therapy. Thrombolytic therapy was started in one of our patients because thrombus was very large (40x25 mm).

In patients with dilated cardiomyopathy, the prognosis is poor despite medical treatment. Heart transplantation should be considered in patients with multiple organ failure and require treatment with mechanical ventilator despite medical treatment.^[26] In our study, heart transplantation was performed in four (5%) patients. The mortality rate has been reported to be between 11.5 and 26.9% in the studies performed. In our study, the mortality rate in our patients was found to be 36.7 percent.

In conclusion, the main factors affecting mortality and five-year survival in patients with DCM have been found as kinship marriages, detection of cardiomegaly in telecardiograms at the time of diagnosis, and lower EF and SF values, and higher grades of mitral regurgitation in echocardiography.

Ethics Committee Approval: Approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Yenimahalle Training and Research Hospital (decisionj no: 2017/10/09 File no: 2017/57).

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict-of-interest: None.

Authorship contributions: Concept: M.E.A.; Design: M.E.A.; Control: U.A.O.; Material: T.Y.; Data collection: M.E.A., T.Y.; Analysis: M.E.A., A.Ö.; Compilation of sources: M.E.A., S.K.; Writing: M.E.A., S.K.; Critical Revision: U.A.Ö., T.Y.

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- Keywords:** Children; dilated cardiomyopathy; prognosis.
- Anahtar sözcükler:** Çocuklar; dilate kardiyomiyopati; prognoz.