

Dyspnea

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All patients with congenital hemolytic anemia share two common problems, low red blood cell count and a lot of waste products from a high destruction rate of red blood cells. Doctors and patients may easily dismiss complaints of shortness of breath because of the severity of the anemia.

However, cardiopulmonary exercise testing has showed the major reason to quit exercising in these patients is muscle cramps or leg tiredness and not shortness of breath. So, when patients with congenital hemolytic anemia complain about shortness of breath the doctor should review not only the hemoglobin level but also other causes.

During this presentation the most prevalent causes of sudden and chronic shortness of breath in congenital hemolytic anemia will be discussed. These causes may include hemolytic crisis, co-poisoning, methemoglobinemia, bronchospasm, pulmonary embolism, pneumothorax, pneumonia, ARDS, cardiac arrhythmia, metabolic acidosis, sepsis, pregnancy and restrictive lung disease. Pulmonary hypertension is an important cause of shortness of breath as well but will be addressed in the presentation by dr. G. Kato during the Saturday 11:30-13:00 session.