

Vilniaus universitetas  
Medicinos fakultetas



# STUDENTŲ MOKSLINĖS VEIKLOS TINKLO LXXVIII KONFERENCIJA



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Leidinį sudarė VU MF  
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## SURGICAL TREATMENT OF INFECTIVE ENDOCARDITIS IN PERSONS WHO INJECT DRUGS: A CASE SERIES

**Author.** Rusnė PRIALGAUSKAITĖ, 5<sup>th</sup> year medical student.

**Supervisors.** Prof. Kęstutis RUČINSKAS M.D., PhD, Assoc. Prof. Vilius JANUŠAUSKAS M.D., PhD, Assoc. Prof. Aleksejus ZORINAS M.D., PhD, VU MF Institute of Clinical Medicine, Clinic of Cardiovascular Diseases.

**Introduction.** Infective endocarditis (IE) is a relatively rare condition in the general population; however, nearly one third of persons who inject drugs (PWID) are diagnosed with IE at least once. Treating drug use–related IE addresses both infection and the underlying addiction. If the addiction is not adequately controlled, recurrent IE rates range from 10% to 30%. These case reports illustrate the complexity of IE as a complication of intravenous drug use.

**Case report.** Patient A was a 40-year-old woman with a long-standing history of intravenous drug use who presented with sepsis secondary to tricuspid valve IE. Her clinical course was complicated by multiple organ dysfunction syndrome, including acute renal failure. Due to persistent infection and clinical deterioration, urgent tricuspid valve replacement was performed. One year later, the patient was diagnosed with recurrent prosthetic tricuspid valve IE with renal dysfunction and subsequently died of IE-related complications.

Patient B was a 33-year-old woman enrolled in a methadone maintenance program who presented with tricuspid valve IE complicated by sepsis. She underwent tricuspid valve replacement. Three years later, recurrent IE required replacement of the tricuspid valve prosthesis. Continued intravenous drug use was suspected. Despite repeated surgical intervention, another recurrence of prosthetic valve IE was documented three years later.

**Discussion.** These cases highlight the limitations of a purely biomedical approach to IE in PWID. Despite technically successful surgery and guideline-concordant antimicrobial therapy, both patients experienced recurrent valvular pathology. This pattern emphasizes that in intravenous drug use–associated IE, surgical intervention alone represents a temporary measure rather than a definitive solution.

**Conclusions.** Without treating addiction, repeated valve surgery in IE is intervention without resolution. In drug use–associated IE, surgery treats the valve, but addiction determines the outcome.

**Keywords.** Infective endocarditis; recurrent infective endocarditis; persons who inject drugs; valve replacement.