Massive Pulmonary Embolism from worsening of Gouty Arthritis due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Gout is the most common inflammatory arthritis in men and is associated with increased mortality and is an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease such as myocardial infarction and stroke. In addition, several other types of inflammatory arthritis have been linked to increased risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE). VTE is associated high mortality of around 9.7% for PE and 4.6% for DVT. However, only a handful of studies have been conducted to estimate the risk of VTE in patients with gout before or after diagnosis. Most recent study in Canada concluded that patients with gout have around a 20% increase in risk compared to the general population for VTE. However, they stated not all gout patients carry the same risk and further research is needed to identify high risk factors and implement prophylactic therapy. In addition to that, multiple studies have concluded that alcohol sales, mental health illness, and drug use has increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. We present an interesting case of a 64-year-old patient with history of chronic gout which worsened within the last six months, first leading to DVT and a few months later a massive pulmonary embolism (PE). The patient had multiple high-risk factors for PE including chronic gout with worsening flare ups due to the excessive alcohol drinking since the COVID-19 pandemic and recent non-adherence to DVT anticoagulant medication for a month. We highlight the importance to monitor for high-risk factors such as excessive alcohol use and immobility in patients with inflammatory condition such as gout especially during the COVID pandemic.