

# Basal Ventricular Septal Hypertrophy in Systemic Hypertension

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1 **Abstract**

2  
3 Basal septal hypertrophy (BSH) is commonly seen in patients with systemic hypertension and has  
4 been associated with increased afterload. The impact of localized hypertrophy on left ventricular  
5 (LV) and left atrial (LA) function is still unclear. Our aim is to investigate if BSH is a marker of a  
6 more pronounced impact of hypertension on cardiac function in the early stages of hypertensive  
7 heart disease. An echocardiogram was performed in 163 well-controlled hypertensive patients  
8 and 22 healthy individuals. BSH was defined by a basal-to-mid septal thickness ratio  $\geq 1.4$ . LV  
9 dimensions and mass were evaluated. LV global and regional deformation was assessed by 2-  
10 dimensional (2D) speckle tracking echocardiography (STE), and LV diastolic function by 2D and  
11 Doppler imaging. LA function was evaluated with phasic volume indices calculated from 2D and  
12 3-dimensional (3D) volumes, as well as STE. The population was 54% men, mean age 57 (53-60)  
13 years. BSH was seen in 20% (n=32) of the hypertensive cohort. Patients with BSH showed  
14 decreased regional LV systolic deformation, impaired LV relaxation with a higher proportion of  
15 indeterminate LV diastolic function, and LA functional impairment defined by a reduction of  
16 reservoir strain and a change in LA functional dynamics. In conclusion, in well-controlled  
17 hypertension impairment of LV and LA function is present in patients with early LV remodeling  
18 and localized hypertrophy. BSH might be useful as an early marker of the burden of hypertensive  
19 heart disease.

20 **Keywords:** hypertension, hypertrophy/remodeling, basal septal hypertrophy, speckle tracking  
21 echocardiography

## 1 **Introduction**

2 Concentric LV hypertrophy is the long-term physiological adaptation to a continued increase in  
3 afterload<sup>1</sup>. However, in early stages of hypertensive heart disease the increase in wall thickness is  
4 gradual, changes in wall thickness are not uniform<sup>2</sup> and a part of patients develop localized basal  
5 septal hypertrophy (BSH)<sup>3-7</sup>. The finding of BSH in volunteers with no prior history of elevated  
6 blood pressure has been shown to be related to masked hypertension.<sup>1</sup> While BSH can be seen in  
7 2% of the general population, rising up to 18% in the elderly,<sup>5</sup> only a few studies have  
8 investigated the prevalence in hypertensive cohorts, finding it to be around 20%<sup>3,8</sup>. We  
9 hypothesize that hypertensive patients with BSH have a more extensive burden of the  
10 hypertensive disease with more impact on cardiac function. The aim of this research was  
11 therefore, to perform a comprehensive LV and LA assessment in well-controlled hypertensive  
12 patients, comparing cardiac function among those with and without BSH.

## 13 **Methods**

14 The cohort consisted of 163 hypertensive patients and 22 healthy individuals used as a  
15 control reference group. The participants were studied at two centers - Hospital Clinic Barcelona  
16 and the University Hospital Centre in Zagreb. Hypertensive patients with well-controlled blood  
17 pressure (BP < 130/80 mmHg by self-reported control), treated during a minimum of 3 years with  
18 antihypertensive drugs, were included. Patients were recruited from the out-patient clinic and  
19 from general practitioner referrals. Exclusion criteria were history of heart failure or previously  
20 known target organ disease. Healthy controls included volunteers from the local community, that  
21 were presumed healthy, without prior history of hypertension, diabetes or other significant  
22 cardiac or non-cardiac diseases. All participants underwent a clinical interview with survey about  
23 cardiovascular risk factors, family medical history, comorbidities, and pharmacological treatment

1 - followed by a comprehensive echocardiographic examination. The study was approved by the  
2 corresponding hospital ethical committees, and participants gave written informed consent.

3 Examinations were performed according to current recommendations<sup>9</sup> on a commercially  
4 available Vivid E9 or E95 system (GE, Vingmed Ultrasound, Horten, Norway) equipped with a  
5 M5S and 4Vc transthoracic transducer, respectively. Images were analyzed using Echopac  
6 software (GE Medical Systems, version 202.41.0). Participants were studied with 2D and  
7 Doppler echocardiography, as well as 2D speckle tracking deformation imaging. Real-time 3D  
8 scans of the LA were obtained with the probe in the apical position during breath-hold in  
9 hypertensive patients.

10 The anteroseptal and inferoseptal wall thickness were measured at end-diastole at basal-  
11 and mid-level in the parasternal long axis (PLAX) and 4-chamber cardiac views, respectively  
12 (**Figure 1**). Measurements were obtained in 2D images, with one caliper positioned on the  
13 interface between the myocardial wall and cavity and the other at the transition of the LV to the  
14 RV septal myocardium. BSH was defined based on the basal-to-mid septal wall thickness ratio of  
15  $\geq 1.4$  in either the 4-chamber or PLAX view. LV mass was calculated by the linear method and  
16 normalized by body surface area, and sex-dependent cut-off values were used to indicate LV  
17 hypertrophy<sup>9</sup>. Relative wall thickness (RWT) was calculated by dividing the doubled value of the  
18 end-diastolic posterior wall thickness with the end-diastolic internal diameter of the LV. The type  
19 of LV remodeling was determined based on the RWT and indexed LV mass<sup>9</sup>.

20 Deformation of the LV and LA was assessed using speckle tracking echocardiography  
21 (STE) software on 2D grayscale images obtained from the apical 4-chamber view. The analysis  
22 of LA deformation was performed in the 4- and 2-chamber apical views. Using the beginning of  
23 the P wave as the onset for deformation analysis, left atrial reservoir, conduit, and contractile  
24 function were evaluated by measuring LA systolic, early diastolic and late diastolic strain,

1 respectively and averaged from the 4- and 2-chamber measurements. LA function was  
2 additionally assessed using 2D and 3D LA volumes - the minimal, maximal, and the volume  
3 before atrial contraction at the beginning of the P wave. Standard indexes of LA function were  
4 calculated using volumes indexed to BSA - total ejection fraction, active and passive emptying  
5 fraction and the active contribution to LV filling.

6 Further details on echocardiography, LV mass calculation and the assessment of intra-  
7 observer and inter-observer reproducibility of septal thickness, ventricular and atrial strain  
8 measurements are described in the **Supplementary Materials**.

9 The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 23.0. The quantitative variables  
10 were expressed as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation or median and interquartile range based on the  
11 normality of their distribution evaluated by the Shapiro-Wilk test. The qualitative variables as a  
12 total number and percentage. Differences between groups were analyzed for statistical  
13 significance with the ANOVA test when comparing variables with normal distribution and the  
14 Wilcoxon test for non-normally distributed variables. Post-hoc comparisons were assessed with  
15 the Bonferroni correction. When comparing categorical data, contingency tables and a Chi-square  
16 test were used. In the case the table contained a cell with the expected value of less than 5, the  
17 Fisher's exact test was used for comparison. A value of  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically  
18 significant.

## 19 **Results**

20 Clinical characteristics of the cohort are presented in **Table 1**. In the BSH subgroup, 88%  
21 (n=28) of the patients were classified as BSH in both 4C and PLAX views, whereas 9% (n=3)  
22 and 3% (n=1) had positive criteria for BSH only in the 4C and PLAX view, respectively.

1 Hypertensive patients and healthy controls had comparable age and gender characteristics  
2 (median age 57 vs. 54 years, male sex 55% vs. 46%). Hypertensive patients with BSH were  
3 older, with no differences considering the duration of hypertension, comorbidities - such as  
4 diabetes or dyslipidemia, or antihypertensive therapy as compared to those without BSH.

5 Characteristics of LV size and function are presented in **Table 2** and **Figure 2**. While all  
6 patients with BSH had abnormal LV geometry, it was normal in 17% of hypertensives without  
7 BSH and a majority of controls. LV ejection fraction and GLS was preserved in all groups;  
8 however, marked segmental abnormalities in LV systolic deformation were seen in hypertensive  
9 patients with BSH with a significant decline in longitudinal strain in the basal and mid-  
10 inferoseptum (**Figure 2**).

11 There was a trend of lower mitral E and diastolic pulmonary vein velocities in the BSH  
12 patients as compared to hypertensive patients without BSH and the controls, while the mitral A  
13 velocity was higher - resulting in a significantly lower E/A ratio of the BSH subgroup. BSH was  
14 also associated with increased a' and lower e' velocities of the mitral annulus. IVRT showed a  
15 clear trend of prolongation in the hypertensive subgroups. Using the current algorithms for  
16 diagnosing diastolic dysfunction in patients with preserved ejection fraction, none of the  
17 participants fulfilled criteria for diastolic dysfunction. All healthy controls were diagnosed with  
18 normal diastolic function, whereas 8% (n=11) of the non-BSH hypertensive patients and 19%  
19 (n=6) of the BSH patients fulfilled criteria for indeterminate function (**Figure 3**).

20 Characteristics of LA size and function are presented in **Table 3**. Looking at 2D and 3D  
21 volume measurements, there were no significant group differences in LA size or in LA ejection  
22 fraction. However, the passive emptying fraction, related to LA conduit function, was  
23 significantly lower in the BSH subgroup resulting in significantly larger pre-atrial contraction  
24 volumes in these patients. Furthermore, BSH was associated with augmented LA contractile

1 function – higher active emptying volumes and higher contribution of active emptying to LV  
2 filling volume.

3 Left atrial deformation patterns of representative participants from each subgroup are  
4 shown in **Figure 4**. Both hypertensive patient groups had notably lower LA reservoir strain as  
5 compared to healthy controls. Conduit strain was significantly lower in hypertensive patients  
6 with BSH, while the contractile strain was higher. The change in LA dynamics was quantified  
7 with the subgroup differences in the LA conduit to contractile ratio. Phasic volumes calculated  
8 from 3D measurements correlated with corresponding strain measurements (see **Supplementary**  
9 **Materials**).

## 10 **Discussion**

11 BSH was present in 19.6% of our hypertensive cohort with well controlled hypertension.  
12 Patients with BSH were older, but with no differences in comorbidities or antihypertensive  
13 therapy as compared to non-BSH patients. BSH was related to decreased regional LV  
14 deformation, signs of impaired LV relaxation and a higher rate of indeterminate LV diastolic  
15 function. While LA size was similar, functional remodeling of the LA was seen in the BSH  
16 subgroup with a significant shift from an early to a late filling pattern - as demonstrated by the  
17 mitral inflow velocities, annular motion, LA phasic volumes and the LA conduit and contractile  
18 strain.

19 The echocardiographic finding of BSH has been shown to be predictive of arterial  
20 hypertension, suggesting that it may be a morphological marker of increased afterload.<sup>1</sup>  
21 Localized BSH and changes in deformation can be attributed to regional disparities in wall stress.  
22 Differences in local radius of curvature of the LV myocardial wall result in a heterogeneous wall  
23 stress distribution with a decrease from base to apex<sup>10,11</sup>. The septum is shown to have a greater



1 radius of curvature compared to the free wall<sup>12,13</sup>. In a normal blood pressure setting the right  
2 ventricle normalizes the transmural pressure across the septum, and thus compensates for the  
3 flatness of the region. With the rise in systemic blood pressure this compensation becomes  
4 insufficient, and the increase in wall stress becomes disproportionately higher in the basal parts of  
5 the septum<sup>13</sup>, creating an imbalance between locally developed force and wall stress, and leading  
6 to decreased local deformation. With prolonged exposure to increased afterload, this imbalance  
7 may trigger cell mechanisms that result in the development of compensatory localized  
8 hypertrophy in an attempt to normalize wall stress and maintain deformation. In accordance with  
9 this, our results show the septum is thicker than the posterolateral wall in the hypertensive group,  
10 a finding also seen in magnetic resonance (MR) studies measuring wall thickness in hypertensive  
11 patients<sup>14</sup>, but not in the MR studies of the healthy population<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, we show a  
12 decrease of basal inferoseptal deformation, pronounced in the BSH patients, where it was  
13 combined with thickening of the basal septal wall - suggesting incomplete compensation of high  
14 wall stress in this subgroup.

15 At initial assessment, the only difference between the two hypertensive subgroups  
16 appeared to be BSH. With further analysis, we saw LV geometry classification signal a shift  
17 towards more advanced LV remodeling. There was further decrease of regional LV deformation  
18 related to BSH, and a typical pattern of impaired LV relaxation - determined by the IVRT, mitral  
19 and pulmonary vein inflow and mitral annular velocities<sup>15</sup>. This was coupled with a higher  
20 proportion of patients demonstrating indeterminate diastolic dysfunction – a classification  
21 previously associated with intermediate diastolic impairment<sup>16</sup>. LA assessment in BSH showed a  
22 reduction in LA reservoir function as compared to healthy controls, and a pronounced reduction  
23 in LA conduit together with an increase in LA contractile function compared to the non-BSH  
24 subgroup. LA functional compensatory mechanisms serve as acute regulators of LA performance

1 in response to impairment of LV filling<sup>17,18</sup>, showing a decreased atrial conduit function coupled  
2 with a compensatory, augmented contractile function in early stages of LV filling impairment.  
3 The analysis of atrial function with 2D and 3D LA phasic-volume indices further confirmed these  
4 findings. Abnormalities in LA function have been previously shown in patients with hypertension  
5 without decreased LV global systolic performance and without LA enlargement<sup>19-21</sup>. Overall, our  
6 findings indicate further LA functional impairment in hypertensive patients with BSH, potentially  
7 increasing the cardiovascular risk of this subgroup<sup>22</sup>.

8         This is a medium size single-center cohort of hypertensive patients with well-controlled  
9 blood pressure. Although our cohort is not representative of the whole hypertensive spectrum, the  
10 impairment associated to BSH was seen even in these well-controlled patients. We applied a  
11 previously used cut-off value for the basal-to-mid septal wall thickness ratio. Reassuringly, the  
12 prevalence of BSH and the reproducibility of septal measurements corresponded to data seen in  
13 previous publications<sup>1,3,8</sup>. The linear method of LV mass assessment is flawed in the presence of  
14 asymmetric hypertrophy. Additional exploration of this topic can be found in the **Supplementary**  
15 **Materials**. The age difference in our study should not result in any considerable differences in  
16 strain values, nevertheless, this could be a potential limitation. Localized hypertrophy of the basal  
17 region can also be seen in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). Unfortunately, genetic  
18 information was not available in our cohort. However, family histories of disease or sudden  
19 cardiac death, as well as the patient's electrocardiograms were reviewed and none had positive  
20 findings. The heterogenic deformation pattern seen in HCM<sup>23</sup> was not noted in our cohort either.  
21 Moreover, the wall thickness seen in the BSH subgroup was lower than the criteria for HCM  
22 (basal inferoseptum median was 13 mm compared to the 15 mm cut-off in the guidelines<sup>24</sup>).  
23 Finally, echocardiographic data prior to the onset of hypertension or data on extended blood

1 pressure monitoring was not available. These data would be crucial to explore why selected  
2 patients with arterial hypertension develop BSH.

3 In conclusion, BSH is commonly seen in arterial hypertension. Changes in LV and LA  
4 function are already present in well-regulated patients with early LV remodeling and localized  
5 hypertrophy. Patients with BSH demonstrate decreased regional LV systolic deformation and  
6 impaired LV relaxation with a higher level of indeterminate diastolic dysfunction, coupled with  
7 more LA functional impairment, potentially increasing their cardiovascular risk. Therefore, the  
8 presence of BSH might be useful as a marker of the burden of hypertensive heart disease.

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- 13

1  
2 **Tables**

3  
4 **Table 1.** Clinical characteristics of the cohort  
5

Variable	Healthy controls (n=22)	Basal septal hypertrophy		Group P value
		No (n=131)	Yes (n=32)	
Age ( <i>years</i> )	54 (51-54)	57 (53-60)	60 (55-63)*†	<b>0.001</b>
Men	10 (46%)	68 (52%)	21 (66%)	0.280
Body mass index ( <i>kg/m<sup>2</sup></i> )	24.8±2.7	28.0±4.5*	28.8±3.6*	<b>0.001</b>
Body surface area ( <i>m<sup>2</sup></i> )	1.93±0.18	1.91±0.23	1.99±0.20	0.189
Duration of hypertension ( <i>years</i> )	-	8 (5-14)	9 (6-15)	0.274
Systolic blood pressure ( <i>mmHg</i> )	124±12	136±16*	142±15*	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Diastolic blood pressure ( <i>mmHg</i> )	81±8	79±10	82±10	0.279
Heart rate ( <i>beats per minute</i> )	62±8	67±10*	69±10*	<b>0.020</b>
Diabetes mellitus	0	14 (11%)*	6 (19%)*	0.081
Dyslipidemia	0	66 (51%)	18 (56%)	0.694
Treated with two or more antihypertensive drugs	0	64 (49%)	22 (69%)	0.050



Treated with three or more drugs	0	18 (14%)	6 (19%)	0.577
Beta blocker	0	27 (21%)	7 (22%)	1
Aldosterone receptor blockers	0	54 (41%)	15 (47%)	0.690
Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor	0	50 (38%)	15 (47%)	0.422
Calcium antagonists	0	35 (27%)	9 (28%)	1
Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor or calcium antagonists	0	74 (57%)	21 (66%)	0.425
Diuretics	0	44 (34%)	13 (41%)	0.536
Statins	0	26 (20%)	10 (31%)	0.233
Any lipid lowering drug	0	40 (31%)	11 (34%)	0.674
* $P < 0.05$ versus healthy controls				
† $P < 0.05$ versus patients without basal septal hypertrophy				

1  
2

1 **Table 2.** Characteristics of LV size and function  
2

Variables	Healthy controls (n=22)	Basal septal hypertrophy		Group P value
		No (n=131)	Yes (n=32)	
LV ejection fraction (%)	58 (54-60)	55 (53-58)	61 (56-64)†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
LV global longitudinal strain (%)	-20.92±2.78	-21.14±2.37	-20.28±3.14	0.238
LV end-systolic volume (ml)	45 (38-52)	47 (41-59)	36 (30-43)†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
LV end-diastolic volume (ml)	103 (92-115)	107 (94-129)	92 (80-113)†	<b>0.003</b>
Posterior wall thickness (mm)	0.8 (0.8-1.0)	1.1 (1.0-1.2)*	1.1 (1.0-1.2)*	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Basal-to-mid anteroseptal wall thickness ratio	1.1 (1.0-1.2)	1.1 (1.0-1.2)	1.4 (1.2-1.6)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Basal-to-mid inferoseptal wall thickness ratio	1.1 (1.0-1.2)	1.1 (1.0-1.3)	1.6 (1.4-1.7)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Indexed LV mass (g/m <sup>2</sup> )	66.5 (53.8-78.7)	75.6 (66.1-89.0)*	93.3 (81.3-101.5)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Relative wall thickness	0.37 (0.34-0.39)	0.52 (0.44-0.59)*	0.55 (0.48-0.60)*	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Normal LV geometry	18 (82%)	22 (17%)	0	
Concentric remodeling	4 (18%)	100 (77%)	28 (88%)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Concentric hypertrophy	0	8 (6%)	4 (12%)	

Isovolumic relaxation time ( <i>ms</i> )	80 (74-90)	85 (79-95)	90 (79-97)	0.055
E velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	75±14	72±14	66±19	0.063
E deceleration time ( <i>ms</i> )	191±36	194±37	195±39	0.718
A velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	64±15	72±14*	78±13*	<b>0.006</b>
A duration ( <i>ms</i> )	115 (107-127)	125 (115-135)*	130 (118-145)*	<b>0.006</b>
E/A ratio	1.17 (0.97-1.36)	0.99 (0.82-1.17)*	0.82 (0.70-1.01)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Pulmonary vein S velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	59±8	58±9	55±8	0.207
Pulmonary vein D velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	44 (41-48)	41 (37-47)	38 (34-42)*	<b>0.019</b>
Pulmonary vein S/D ratio	1.37±0.21	1.40±0.26	1.46±0.28	0.454
Pulmonary vein A velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	31 (29-34)	27 (25-29)*	27 (24-29)*	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Mitral annulus septal e' velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	8.0 (7.0-9.0)	8.0 (7.0-10.0)	7.0 (6.0-8.0)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Mitral annulus lateral e' velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	-	11.0 (9.0-13.0)	9.0 (8.0-11.0)	<b>0.012</b>
Mitral annulus septal a' velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	10.0 (9.0-11.3)	10.0 (8.0-11.0)	11.0 (9.0-12.0)†	<b>0.032</b>
Mitral annulus lateral a' velocity ( <i>cm/s</i> )	-	10.0 (9.0-13.0)	12.0 (9.3-13.0)	0.221
Tricuspid annular plane systolic excursion ( <i>mm</i> )	27±3	23±4*	21±4*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

\*  $P < 0.05$  versus healthy controls

†  $P < 0.05$  versus patients without basal septal hypertrophy

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1 **Table 3.** Characteristics of LA size and function  
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Variables		Healthy controls (n=22)	Basal septal hypertrophy		P value
			No (n=131)	Yes (n=32)	
LA maximal volume (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	28.5 (21.2-32.4)	27.8 (24.0-31.9)	31.1 (26.3-34.2)	0.152
	3D	-	31.9 (25.5-37.2)	32.2 (27.4-38.4)	0.226
LA minimal volume, (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	10.4 (9.2-16.1)	12.5 (10.3-15.8)	14.3 (12.1-17.4)	0.084
	3D	-	13.5 (11.4-16.4)	16.5 (11.4-18.3)	0.069
LA pre-atrial contraction volume, (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	19.1(15.8-25.0)	20.1 (17.4-24.0)	23.2 (20.2-27.6)†	<b>0.019</b>
	3D	-	20.7 (17.0-24.6)	22.9 (20.4-22.9)	<b>0.011</b>
LA ejection fraction (%)	2D	55±9	54± 8	52±7	0.678
	3D	-	55±7	54±6	0.605
LA stroke volume, (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	14.9 (11.7-16.9)	15.2 (12.4-17.4)	15.6 (12.9-18.6)	0.558
	3D	-	16.9 (14.0-20.9)	16.8 (15.5-20.4)	0.646
LA passive emptying fraction (%)	2D	28±9	27±8	22±9*†	<b>0.015</b>
	3D	-	32±9	27±9†	<b>0.005</b>

LA passive emptying volume, (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	7.0 (5.1-9.1)	7.4 (6.0-9.2)	8.3 (7.2-10.6)	0.056
	3D	-	6.7 (5.4-8.6)	8.2 (6.5-11.3)†	<b>0.005</b>
LA active emptying fraction (%)	2D	37±9	37±13	38±9	0.761
	3D	-	33±9	37±8	0.066
LA active emptying volume (ml/m <sup>2</sup> )	2D	7.0 (5.1-9.1)	7.5 (5.9-9.2)	8.3 (7.2-10.6)	0.059
	3D	-	6.7 (5.4-8.8)	8.2 (6.5-10.7)†	<b>0.005</b>
LA active contribution to LV filling (%)	2D	50±13	50±16	57±16*†	<b>0.040</b>
	3D	-	40 (32-49)	50 (40-60)†	<b>0.003</b>
LA reservoir strain (%)	2D	32.37±4.04	29.59±4.89*	28.48±4.67*	<b>0.020</b>
LA conduit strain (%)	2D	18.78±3.67	14.59±3.75*	11.78±3.60*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
LA contractile strain (%)	2D	13.58±2.42	14.99±2.81	16.70±4.02*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
LA conduit to contractile ratio	2D	1.50 (1.16-1.73)	0.95 (0.78-1.17)*	0.71 (0.50-0.94)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
* <i>P</i> <0.05 versus healthy controls					
† <i>P</i> <0.05 versus patients without basal septal hypertrophy					

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1 **Figure legends**

2 **Figure 1.** Images demonstrating measurement of basal septal and mid-septal wall thickness in  
3 parasternal long-axis (*left*) and 4-chamber (*right*) views.

4  
5 **Figure 2.** Comparison of the antero- and inferoseptal wall thickness measured in PLAX and 4-  
6 chamber views, respectively; and regional LV deformation between subgroups, as assessed by  
7 speckle-tracking in the 4-chamber view. A trend in basal and mid-segmental impairment can be  
8 seen in the hypertensive subgroups (*dotted arrows*), significantly pronounced in patients with  
9 BSH (*full arrow*). (*\*P<0.05 versus healthy controls, †P<0.05 versus patients without BSH*)

10  
11 **Figure 3.** Diastolic dysfunction assessment as proposed by current recommendations shows  
12 higher incidence of indeterminate diastolic dysfunction in hypertensive patients with BSH.

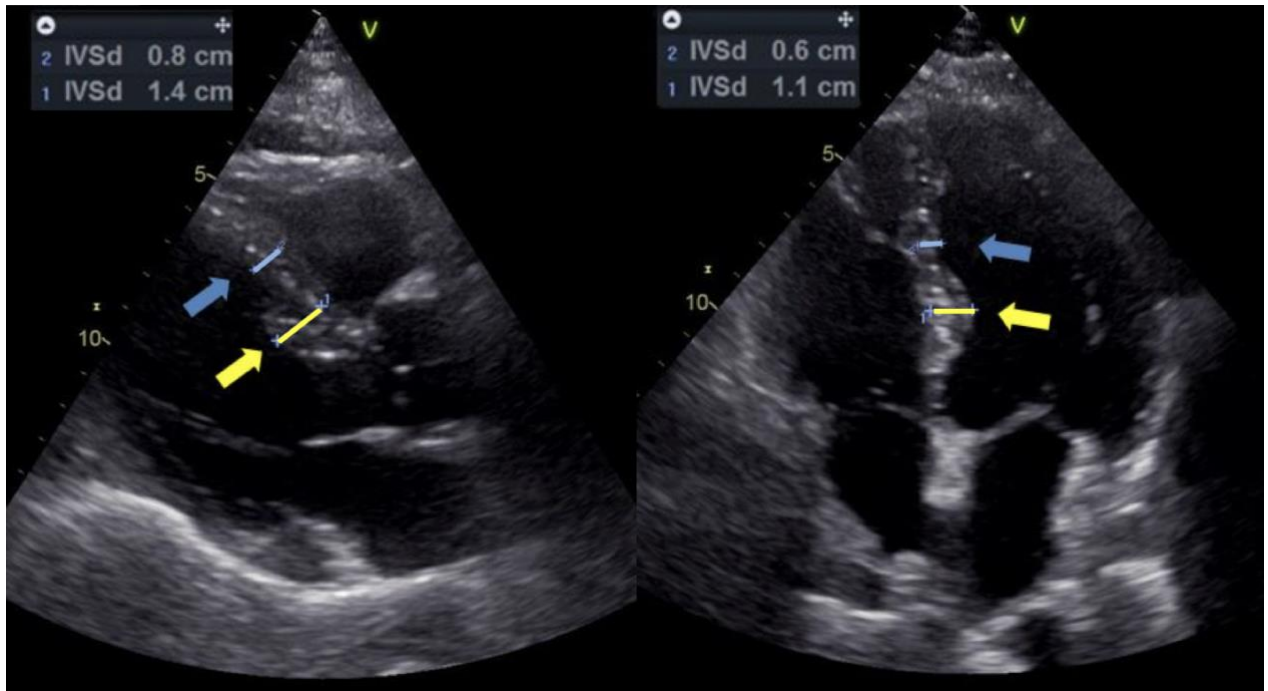
13  
14 **Figure 4.** Comparison of LV morphology (*top images*) and LA function (*bottom images*)  
15 between healthy controls (*left*), hypertensive patients without BSH (*middle*), and hypertensive  
16 patients with BSH (*right*). The scale of shown strain curves is equal in all patients. A reduction in  
17 LA reservoir strain can be seen in the hypertensive patients, coupled with an increase in LA  
18 contractile and reduction of LA conduit function.

19

1 **Figure legends**

2

3 **Figure 1**

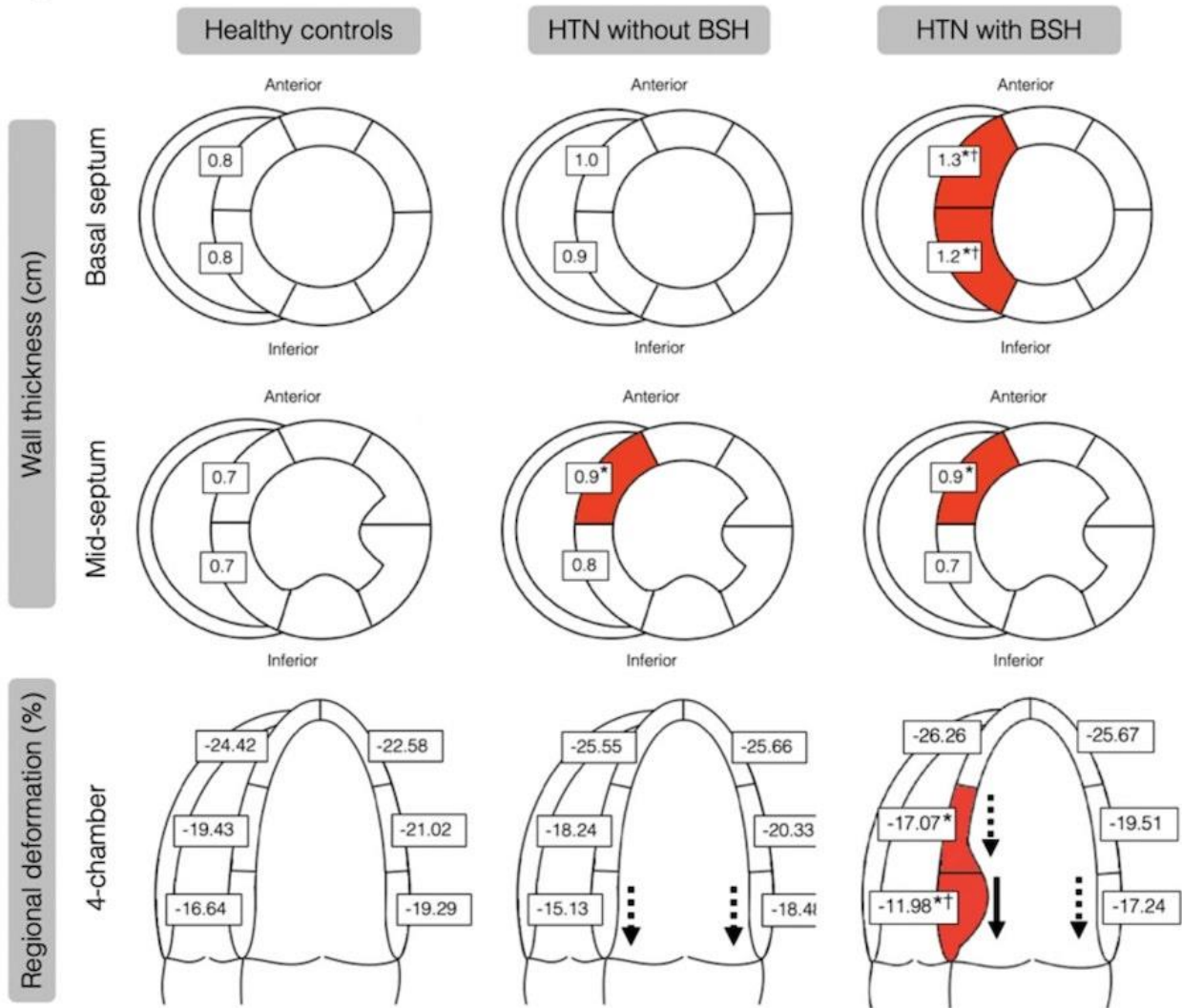


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1 **Figure 2**

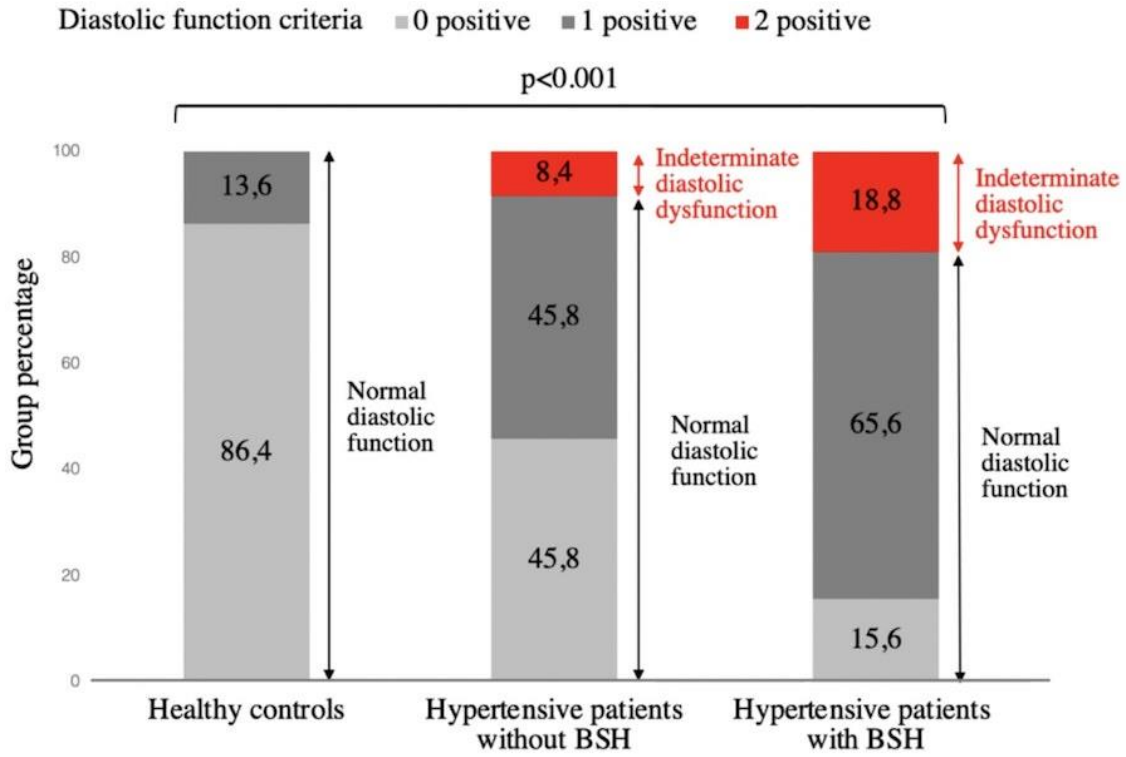


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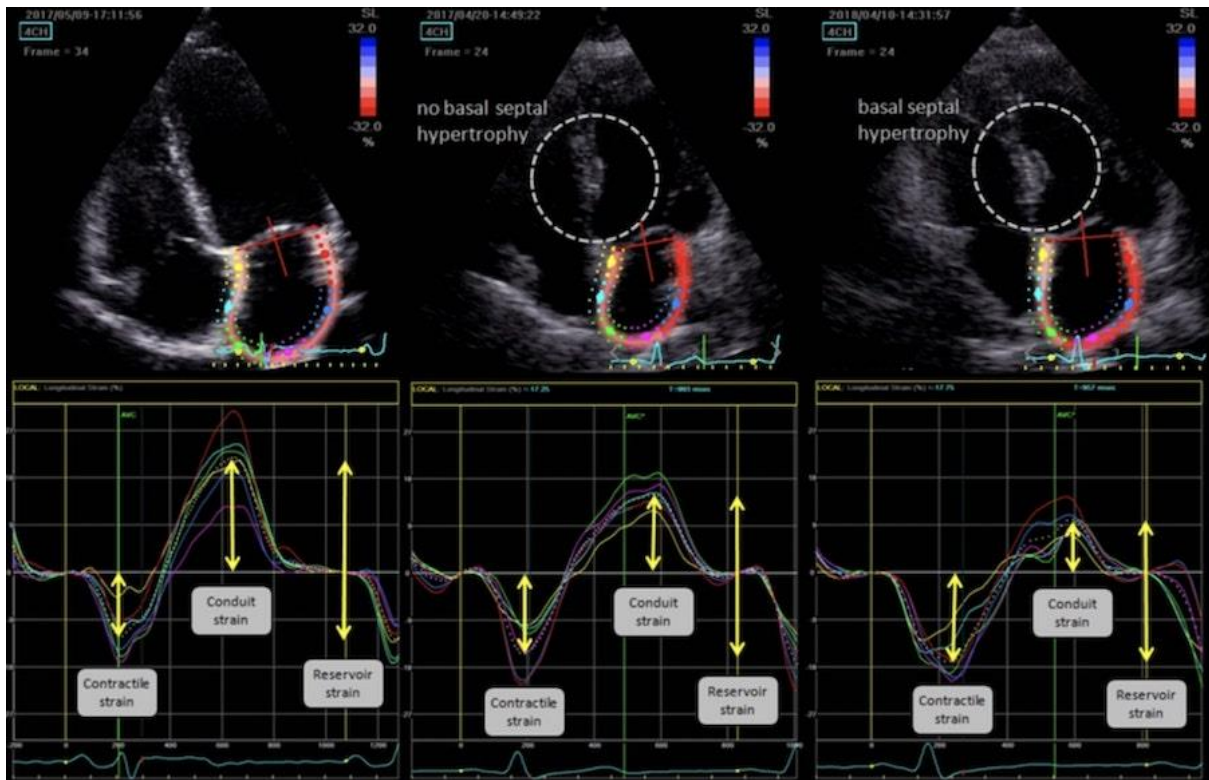
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1 **Figure 3**



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3 **Figure 4**



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## 1 **Supplementary Materials**

### 2 **Expanded Methods**

3

#### 4 **Echocardiography**

5           LV and LA volumes were assessed in the apical 4- and 2-chamber views. LV ejection  
6 fraction was calculated by using the biplane Simpson method. Pulsed-wave Doppler was  
7 performed in the apical 4-chamber view by placing the sample volume at the level of the leaflet  
8 tips to obtain mitral inflow velocities. Peak velocity of early (E) and late (A) diastolic filling, E  
9 velocity deceleration time and A wave duration were measured, and the E/A ratio calculated.  
10 Isovolumic relaxation time (IVRT) was measured as the time difference between aortic valve  
11 closure and mitral valve opening as assessed in the five-chamber view using continuous-wave  
12 Doppler of the LV outflow tract. Pulmonary vein inflow was recorded in the 4-chamber view  
13 with pulsed-wave Doppler and the peak early systolic (S), early diastolic (D) and late diastolic  
14 (A) velocities were recorded and the S/D ratio calculated. Tissue Doppler was used to measure  
15 early and late diastolic mitral annular velocity at the septal (e' and a' septal) and lateral (e' and a'  
16 lateral) annular sites. Diastolic function was assessed according to the current recommendations  
17 and classified as normal function, indeterminate function, or developed diastolic dysfunction<sup>1</sup>.

18           Regional myocardial deformation of the LV was assessed using speckle tracking  
19 echocardiography software on 2D grayscale images obtained from the apical 4-chamber view.  
20 The endocardial border was manually marked at end-systole of the LV. A region of interest with  
21 six segments was automatically generated. If needed, manual adjustments were performed to  
22 achieve optimal tracking. Segments without adequate tracking were excluded from the analysis,  
23 whereas patients with inadequate tracking of more than 3 segments were excluded from the  
24 study. Longitudinal strain curves were generated and end-systolic strain, defined by the aortic

1 valve closure time, was measured. LV global longitudinal strain (LVGLS) was calculated by  
2 averaging values of the segments.

3 The analysis of LA deformation was performed similarly to the process described for the  
4 LV, in the 4- and 2-chamber apical views. Longitudinal strain curves were generated. Using the P  
5 wave as the onset for deformation analysis, left atrial reservoir, conduit, and contractile function  
6 were evaluated by measuring LA systolic, early diastolic and late diastolic strain, respectively  
7 and averaged from the 4- and 2-chamber measurements.

8 LA function was assessed by phasic changes in LA volumes and by myocardial  
9 deformation. Using 2D and 3D measurements, respectively, phasic LA volumes were assessed to  
10 capture the minimal, maximal, and the volume before atrial contraction at the beginning of the P  
11 wave. Standard indexes of LA function were calculated using volumes indexed to the BSA. Total  
12 ejection fraction was calculated as the difference of maximal and minimal volume divided by  
13 maximal volume. Active emptying fraction was calculated as the difference of the volume at the  
14 beginning of the P wave and minimal volume divided by the volume at the beginning of the P  
15 wave. Finally, passive emptying fraction was calculated as the difference of the maximal volume  
16 and the volume at the beginning of the P wave divided by the maximal volume. The active  
17 contribution to LV filling was calculated as [(volume at the beginning of the P wave–minimal  
18 volume)/(maximal volume–minimal volume)]×100.

19

## 20 **Calculation of LV mass and relative wall thickness**

21 Current guidelines <sup>2</sup> recognize that the commonly used M-mode or 2D echocardiography  
22 based methods of assessing LV mass are inaccurate in the setting of asymmetric hypertrophy. In  
23 the setting of BSH, the linear method of LV mass assessment, using the Cube formula

24  $(\overline{LV\ mass} = 0,8 \times 1,04 \times [(IVS + LVID + LVPWd)^3 - LVID^3] + 0,6g)$  results in

1 overestimation of the true mass due to the incorporation of the thick localized hypertrophy in the  
2 region of the basal septum (in the formula: interventricular septum - IVS). On the other hand, the  
3 area-length method, which uses mid-ventricular measurements instead of basal measurements,  
4 will underestimate LV mass, due to the fact that the region of hypertrophy is not included in the  
5 measurement. For asymmetric hearts, 3D echocardiography is the only echocardiography-based  
6 method that is non-dependent on geometric assumptions, and which has been previously shown  
7 to be reliable in assessing asymmetric hypertrophy in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy<sup>3</sup>. Considering  
8 the lack of 3D LV data on LV mass in our cohort, we used the linear method to calculate the LV  
9 mass using both mid-septal and basal septal wall thickness for the IVS variable, respectively. LV  
10 mass was then normalized by body surface area (BSA), and sex-dependent cut-off values were  
11 used to indicate LV hypertrophy. Relative wall thickness (RWT) was calculated by dividing the  
12 doubled value of the end-diastolic posterior wall thickness with the end-diastolic internal  
13 diameter of the LV. The type of LV remodeling was determined based on the RWT and indexed  
14 LV mass. Patients with normal LV mass were categorized as having normal geometry or  
15 concentric remodeling, while the patients with increased LV mass as concentric or eccentric  
16 hypertrophy<sup>2</sup>.

17

### 18 **Intra-observer and inter-observer reproducibility of measurements**

19         Reproducibility of results was assessed for LV GLS, LA contractile strain, LA conduit  
20 strain, and the basal septal wall thickness measurements in both the 4-chamber and PLAX views.  
21 With a two-month interval between measurements, 15 randomly selected patients were  
22 remeasured by the first investigator blinded to the original results. The same patients were then  
23 measured by a second investigator, also blinded to the original results. Analysis of bias and the  
24 calculation of 95% limits of agreement for intra- and inter-observer variability were performed

1 using the Bland-Altman method.<sup>4</sup> The coefficient of variation was also calculated to assess the  
2 variability of measurements.

3

#### 4 **Expanded Results**

##### 5 **LA size and function**

6 The dynamic relationship between LA deformation and LV relaxation was illustrated through the  
7 correlation of the LA conduit to contractile ratio with the E/A ratio (Pearson R 0.524,  $p < 0.001$ )  
8 and the mitral annulus lateral e' velocity (Pearson R 0.437,  $p < 0.001$ ).

9 Phasic volumes calculated from 3D measurements correlated with corresponding strain  
10 measurements - LA reservoir strain with LA ejection fraction (Pearson R 0.446,  $p < 0.001$ ), LA  
11 conduit strain with LA passive emptying fraction (Pearson R 0.438,  $p < 0.001$ ), and LA contractile  
12 strain with LA active emptying fraction (Pearson R 0.386,  $p < 0.001$ ).

13

##### 14 **LV mass calculation**

15 Results are shown in **Supplementary Table 1**. To explore the impact of BSH on the  
16 calculation of LV mass using the linear method, we used both the mid-septal and basal wall  
17 thickness in the cube equation, respectively. Using the mid-septal wall thickness undermines  
18 localized hypertrophy of the basal segment and hence underestimates true LV mass, resulting  
19 with the BSH patients having similar LV mass as in the non-BSH subgroup. When using basal  
20 wall thickness, the LV mass is overestimated and therefore significantly higher in the BSH  
21 subgroup compared to the non-BSH and healthy controls. It is sensible to conclude that the true  
22 LV mass of the BSH cohort is a value in between these two approximations. The corresponding  
23 categorizations of individuals into LV geometry groups will also be affected by these different  
24 approaches. When using mid-septal wall thickness in the calculations all patients with BSH were

1 categorized as having LV concentric remodeling, while the geometry was normal in up to 16% of  
2 hypertensives without BSH and in the majority of controls. As expected, when using basal septal  
3 wall thickness for the calculations, the categorization of healthy controls and non-BSH patients  
4 did not change significantly, while 12% of BSH patients were re-categorized into LV concentric  
5 hypertrophy. In conclusion, this data suggests that the true LV remodeling of BSH patients is  
6 somewhere in between the two categorization approaches – nevertheless implying that LV  
7 remodeling is further developed in patients with BSH than in those without.

8

### 9 **Reproducibility of the results**

10 Reproducibility of the results is shown in **Supplementary Figure 1 and 2, Supplementary**  
11 **Table 2.** Inter- and intraobserver variability of measuring LA contractile strain were 0.3% (95%  
12 CI: -6.1-6.7) and 0.7% (95% CI: -1.39-2.85); and of LA conduit strain 0.9% (95% CI: -3.9-5.8)  
13 and 0.9% (95% CI: -3.7-5.6), respectively. Inter- and intraobserver variability of basal septal  
14 measurements in 4-chamber was 0.06 cm (95% CI: -0.26-0.14) and 0.03 cm (95% CI: -0.20-  
15 0.15), while in the PLAX view 0.03 cm (95% CI: -0.14-0.21) and 0.03 cm (95% CI: -0.18-0.11),  
16 respectively. The coefficients of variability showed similarly low variation in all parameters.

17

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14



1 **Supplementary Tables**

2 **Supplementary Table 1** Assessment of LV mass and RWT using the linear method

3

Variable	Healthy controls (n=22)	Basal septal hypertrophy		Group P value
		No (n=131)	Yes (n=32)	
Indexed LV mass (using basal septal wall thickness) (g/m <sup>2</sup> )	66.5 (53.8- 78.7)	75.3 (66.5- 89.0)*	93.6 (81.2- 100.6)*†	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
- Indexed LV mass (using mid septal wall thickness) (g/m <sup>2</sup> )	63.0 (53.3- 73.3)	70.9 (62.1- 83.9)*	70.0 (61.6- 77.2)	<b>0.048</b>
Relative wall thickness	0.37 (0.34- 0.39)	0.52 (0.44- 0.59)*	0.55 (0.48- 0.60)*	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Mid-septal wall thickness in calculation	Normal LV geometry	18 (82%)	22 (17%)	0
	Concentric remodeling	4 (18%)	102 (79%)	32 (100%)
	Concentric hypertrophy	0	6 (5%)	0
Basal-septal wall thickness in calculation	Normal LV geometry	18 (82%)	22 (17%)	0
	Concentric remodeling	4 (18%)	100 (77%)	28 (88%)
	Concentric hypertrophy	0	8 (6%)	4 (12%)
<p>* <i>P</i>&lt;0.05 versus healthy controls  † <i>P</i>&lt;0.05 versus patients without BSH</p>				

4

5

6

1 **Supplementary Table 2** Analysis of bias and the calculation of 95% limits of agreement for  
 2 interobserver and intraobserver variability in strain and wall thickness parameters.  
 3

Measurement	Intraobserver variability					Interobserver variability			
	N	Mean difference	95% Confidence Interval		CoV	Mean difference	95% Confidence Interval		CoV
			Lower limit	Upper limit			Lower limit	Upper limit	
Basal inferoseptum (cm)	15	-0,03	-0,20	0,15	0,04	-0,06	-0,26	0,14	0,06
Basal anteroseptum (cm)	15	-0,03	-0,18	0,11	0,04	0,03	-0,14	0,21	0,05
Mid-inferoseptum (cm)	15	-0,02	-0,15	0,11	0,04	-0,04	-0,32	0,24	0,10
Mid-anteroseptum (cm)	15	0,01	-0,22	0,23	0,07	-0,05	-0,42	0,32	0,11
Basal to mid-septum inferoseptal ratio	15	-0,01	-0,24	0,23	0,04	-0,01	-0,39	0,36	0,07
Basal to mid-anteroseptal ratio	15	0,03	-0,32	0,38	0,08	-0,01	-0,42	0,40	0,09
LV global longitudinal strain (%)	15	0,6	-5,6	4,4	0,06	0,8	-5,3	3,6	0,06
LA contractile strain (%)	15	0,7	-1,39	2,85	0,09	0,3	-6,1	6,7	0,07
LA conduit strain (%)	15	0,9	-3,7	5,6	0,14	0,9	-3,9	5,8	0,13

*CoV – Coefficient of variation; 4C – 4-chambre view; PLAX – parasternal long axis view; LV – left ventricle, LA – left atrium*

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1 **Supplementary Figure Legends**

2  
3 **Supplementary Figure 1** Analysis of bias and the calculation of 95% limits of agreement for  
4 interobserver (*left*) and intraobserver (*right*) variability. Top row shows the Bland-Altman plots  
5 for variability in 4-chamber (4C) view measurements of LV global longitudinal strain; middle  
6 row shows variability in 4C view measurements for LA contractile strain; while the bottom row  
7 for 4C LA conduit strain.

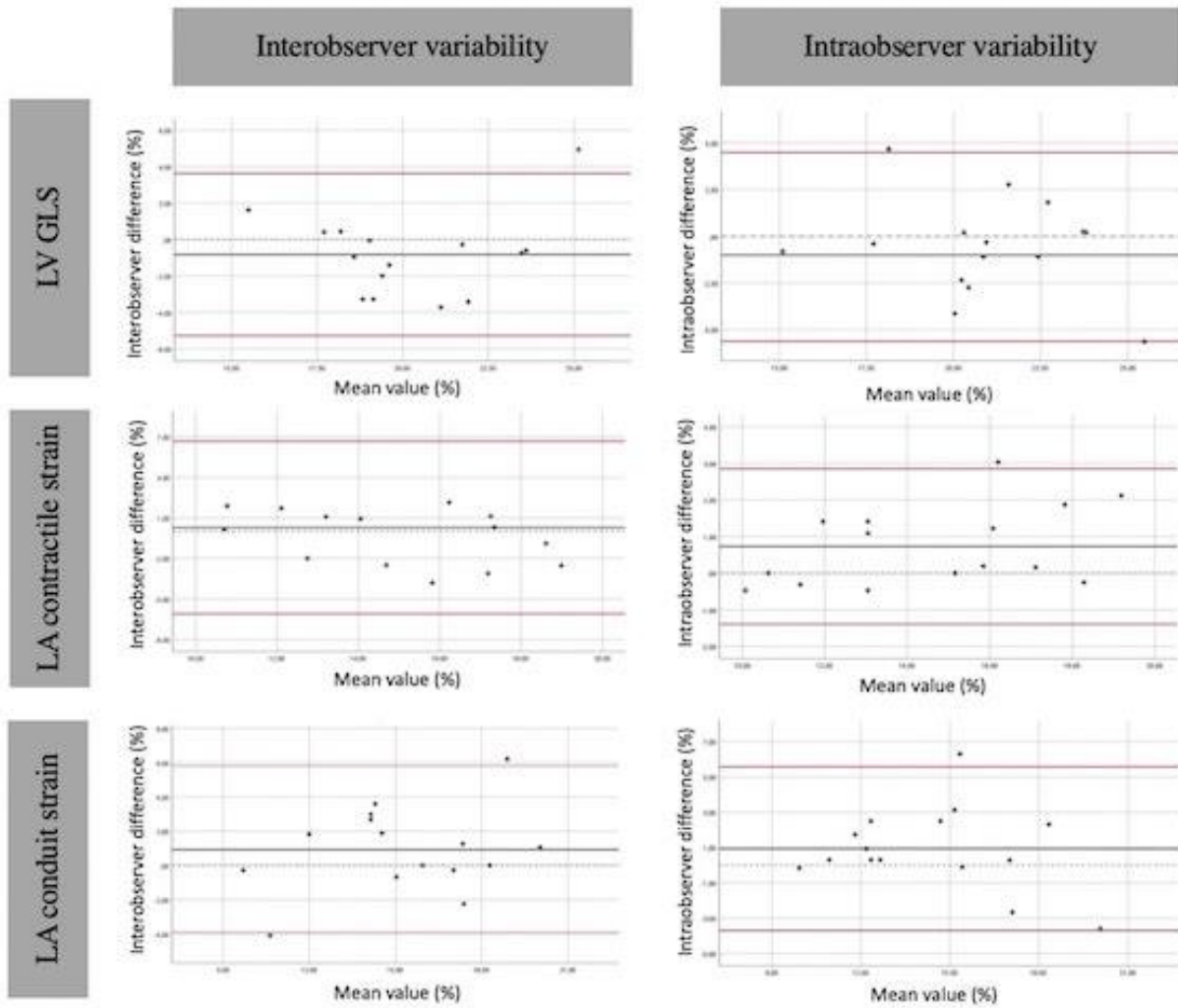
8 **Supplementary Figure 2** Analysis of bias and the calculation of 95% limits of agreement for  
9 interobserver (*left*) and intraobserver (*right*) variability. First and second row show the Bland-  
10 Altman plots for variability in 4-chamber (4C) and parasternal long-axis (PLAX) view  
11 measurements of basal septal wall thickness, respectively; the third and fourth row show  
12 variability in 4C and PLAX basal-to-mid septal wall thickness ratio, respectively.

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1 **Supplementary Figure Legends**

2

3 **Supplementary Figure 1**

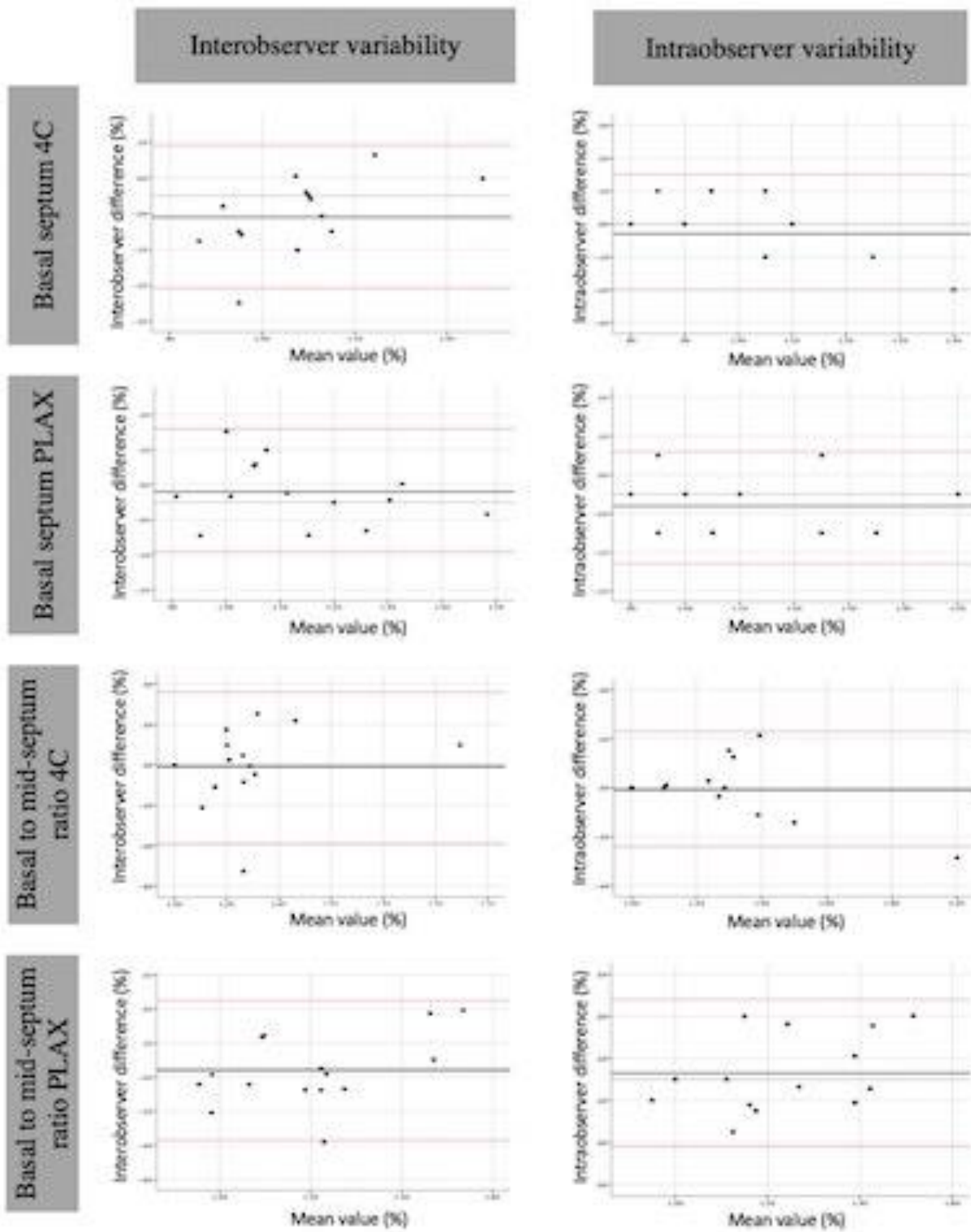


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1 **Supplementary Figure 2**



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