

# CARDIACMASSES

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Cardiac masses can be either thrombus (blood clots) or tumours. Thrombus can be found in patients with poor left ventricular function or longstanding AF, as well as in patients with proximal pulmonary embolus, in either the ventricles or the left atrium. Cardiac tumours can be either benign or malignant, which in turn can be secondary (from lung, oesophagus, breast, etc.) or primary. J Aidan Carney, b. 1934, County Roscommon, Ireland, pathologist at the Mayo Clinic, described a syndrome of myxomas, spotty pigmentation and endocrine overactivity in 1985. This is the most common benign cardiac mass in adults. Myxomas are neoplasms of endocardial origin, often appearing as pedunculated masses most commonly seen in the left (75%) or the right (20%) atria. They are rarely found in the ventricles (Figure 59.31). Myxomas are associated with a congenital disorder (Carney complex) in 5% of cases. They usually present with symptoms related to blood flow obstruction through heart valves or systemic embolisation. Treatment is by surgical excision and recurrence rates are usually <5%.

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