Burden of comorbidities among patients with atrial fibrillation.

Lamori JC, Mody SH, Gross HJ, Dacosta Dibonaventura M, Patel AA, Schein JR, Nelson WW.

Source

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

This study examined comorbidity prevalence and general medication use among individuals with atrial fibrillation in the United States to convey a more comprehensive picture of their total disease burden.

METHODS:

This was a retrospective, observational evaluation of responses to the 2009 wave of the annual Internet-based National Health and Wellness survey, which collects health data including epidemiologic data and information on medical treatment from a representative nationwide sample of adults in the United States. Responses were assessed to determine three measures of comorbidity: mean number of comorbidities, CHADS(2) score reflecting stroke risk (0-6 points; low risk: 0; moderate risk: 1; high risk: ≥2), and scores on the Charlson Comorbidity Index, which is a measure of general comorbidity reflecting presence of a wide range of comorbidities.

RESULTS:

Of the overall sample, 1297 participants reported having been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation. Almost all (98%) of the predominantly male (65.1%) and older (≥65 years of age, 65.7%) population with atrial fibrillation had at least one additional comorbidity, and 90% had cardiovascular comorbidities. On the Charlson Comorbidity Index, 44.9% of the respondents had scores of 1-2 and 20.5% had scores of 3 or higher. High risk for stroke, demonstrated by a CHADS(2) score of at least 2, was present in 45% and moderate risk (CHADS(2) score 1) in 36%. Of the respondents with atrial fibrillation, 71% reported current use of medication to manage the condition, but only 48% of individuals at high risk for stroke reported use of anticoagulation therapy. Of those who reported having common risk factors for stroke, the majority reported receiving prescription therapy for these conditions.

CONCLUSIONS:

The health burden carried by patients often extends far beyond atrial fibrillation. Physicians should carefully consider comorbidities and concomitant medications when managing patients with atrial fibrillation.

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