

Healthcare Associates' Anticoagulation Management Service: Identifying Higher Risk Patients

The Context

Anticoagulation medications (blood thinners) treat a variety of medical conditions and prevent harmful blood clots from forming. Patients require careful monitoring and are at risk for "thrombotic" (or clotting) and "hemorrhagic" (or bleeding) complications while on anticoagulant therapy.

Factors that increase a person's risk are: duration of therapy, intensity of anticoagulation and adherence to monitoring. Patients treated for the indication of heart valve replacement can be at higher risk, because they often require more intense, life-long anticoagulation.

Aim/Goal

- To examine the panel of patients in Healthcare Associates' Anticoagulation Management Service in an effort to begin to identify patients at highest risk.
- To determine the distribution of patients by indication and to begin a focus on higher risk patients with the indication of cardiac valve replacement.

The Team

- Julianne Walsh, RN, BSN, Clinical Nurse, Healthcare Associates' Anticoagulation Management Service
- Michael Thane, MD, Medical Director, Healthcare Associates' Anticoagulation Management Service

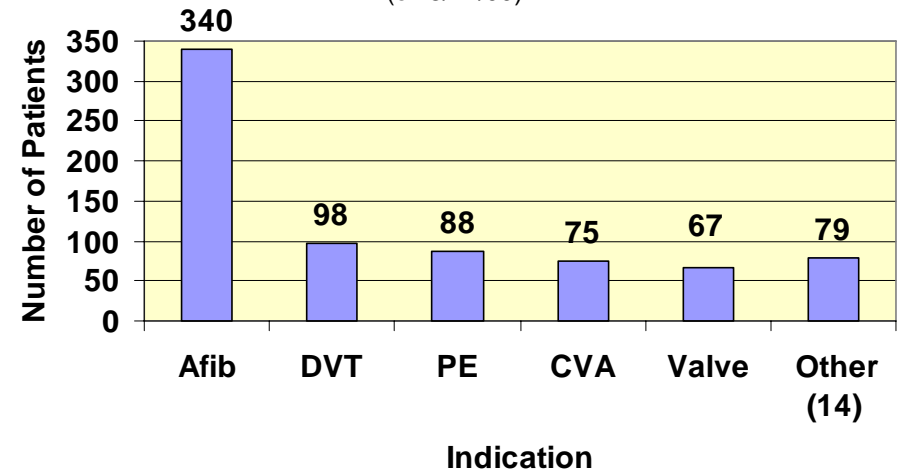
The Results

The panel of 638 patients had 747 indications for anticoagulation. Some patients have more than one indication for anticoagulation.

Approximately 10% of the total number of patients have had cardiac valve replacement and may be at higher risk for complication events.

Number of Patients by Indication

(on 8/24/09)



Next Steps:

- Plans are underway to assess the identified cardiac valve patients for:
 - Type of valve (mechanical vs. bio-prosthetic)
 - Valve position
 - Intensity of anticoagulation
- Future work also includes identifying and communicating plans of care to address sub and supra therapeutic levels of anticoagulation, in an effort to decrease the risk of complications.



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