

PS1.116

Occasional use of antimicrobials among patients taking oral anticoagulant therapy: is there any reason of concern?

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Background & Aim: To assess the degree of control among patients with nonvalvular atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulant therapy (OAT).

Methods: Retrospective study carried out in three primary care centres in Catalonia, Spain. Patients diagnosed of atrial fibrillation (CIAP-2 code K78) taking OAT and controlled only in primary care for one year were asked to record all the antimicrobials taking in the previous year. Patients with severe liver, blood, heart, gastrointestinal, neoplastic, and neurological diseases were excluded. Information about antimicrobial use was also retrieved from the medical records. Good control of OAT was defined as $\geq 60\%$ time of International Normalised Ratio (INR) in therapeutic range (from 2 to 3).

Results: A total of 195 patients fulfilled the inclusion criteria considered in this study. 65.7% of the INRs evaluated in the whole sample were inside therapeutic range. A total of 249 different antimicrobial courses were taken by the participants in the previous year. The leading antimicrobial observed in this study was amoxicillin, taken by 30 individuals (15.4%), followed by amoxicillin+clavulanate (28 cases, 14.4%) and fosfomicin (18, 9.2%). A total of 148 patients who took at least one antimicrobial presented good control (59.4%) without statistical differences compared to those who did not. When patients took levofloxacin, observed in 12 cases, good control was observed in only 41.7% ($p=0.052$).

Conclusions: Both general practitioners and patients are concerned by the occasional intake of antimicrobials when they are simultaneously taking OAT. However, in this retrospective study we failed to observe a worse control of INR when they were taken by these patients.