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The relation between low ankle-brachial index and cardiovascular risk factors in Romania

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Background & Aim: It is known that risk factors for peripheral artery diseases (PAD) are similar with other atherosclerotic disease. Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are at high risk in Romania. According to different international studies, PAD and low ankle-brachial index (ABI) are good predictors for cardiovascular events and mortality. We intend to determine if the prevalence of PAD in our study is comparable with other studies results; low ABI correlates with other CVD risk factors in prediction of CV events.

Methods: 800 patients from Family doctors (GPs) practices all over country were included in a cross-sectional study from November 2010 to February 2011. All patients over 18 years presenting at least one CV risk factor were asked to allow the measurement of ABI. ABI of < 0.9 was considered as an indicator for PAD. The risk factors was identified from patient file and checked at first meeting with their FP. The results was analyzed in terms frequencies and correlations.

Results: 50% of patients included in study had ABI under 0.9. Average age was 60 years, and distribution by gender was balanced. Low ABI correlated with dyslipidaemia (84%), smoking (33%), coronary artery disease (35 %), cerebro-vascular diseases (19%) and PAD (17%). Out of patients founded with low ABI, 56% presented intermittent claudication, 43% decreased/absent pulse and 42% skin changes.

Conclusions: ABI is an affordable measurement for GPs in Romania. The higher prevalence of PAD found in our study compared to the literature could indicate a higher risk (50% compare with 29% in other studies). 75% of patients were diagnosed with symptomatic PAD (compared to 50% reported in the literature as it is) and yet only 17% of them were previously diagnosed with PAD. Should be of interest for future to check these findings in a more extended study.