

Harvard Medical School Department of
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Cardiology Rounds
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Progress in Stroke Prevention and Treatment

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Objectives:

Stroke is a common, devastating, and feared medical malady facing elderly patients. The incidence of stroke, particularly ischemic strokes, can be reduced by effective control of arterial hypertension, appropriate use of antiplatelets, and oral anticoagulation therapy. The objectives of this issue of *Cardiology Rounds* are to enable the reader to better understand the causes of embolic strokes and to review the data that underscore proper use of current and, possibly, future therapeutic options.

Questions:

1. The following are cardiac sources of cerebral emboli.
 - a. Left atrium
 - b. Prosthetic valve
 - c. Endocarditis
 - d. Patent foramen ovale (PFO) for paradoxical embolus from a venous thrombus
 - e. All of the above

2. Atrial fibrillation greatly enhances the risk of stroke due to embolization of a thrombus from the left atrium. However, this risk is only in those patients with permanent and not paroxysmal or persistent atrial fibrillation.
True False

3. Aspirin at 81 mg/day provides significant risk reduction for stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation.
True False

4. For an ischemic stroke patient who presents 12 hours after the onset of symptoms, it is good practice to start IV unfractionated heparin as soon as a CT scan excludes intracranial hemorrhage.
True False

5. For a patient with a prior stroke or transient ischemic attack (high risk), who has a 70% stenosis in the carotid artery ipsilateral to the cerebral ischemic episode, and who is viewed as high risk for carotid endarterectomy because of medical co-morbidities, carotid stenting with a distal protective device is as safe and effective as surgical endarterectomy.

True False

6. In patients with a cryptogenic stroke attributed to a PFO, the role of a percutaneous PFO closure device for prevention of recurrent stroke is currently investigational.

True False

7. Patients who are at high risk for atherosclerosis and who have had a vascular event anywhere in their arterial system should generally be started on statin therapy in order to decrease stroke risk.

True False

To receive AMA category 1 credit, you must correctly answer 60% of the test questions.

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