United Kingdom Survey on The Challenges of Managing Direct Oral Anti-Coagulants and Acute Hip Fracture Surgery

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Introduction

Prior to the 2020 Association of Anaesthetists (AoA) guidance (1), there were no formal UK guidelines for the perioperative management of Direct Oral Anti-Coagulants (DOACs) and hip fracture surgery. Despite literature indicating harm from delay (2) and no benefit from delay in terms of blood loss or transfusion rates (3), people sustaining hip fractures whilst on DOACs still encounter delays to their surgery. This survey aimed to identify whether clinicians experienced difficulties when managing people who present to hospital on a DOAC and require acute hip fracture surgery, and what the perceived consequences of any delay were.

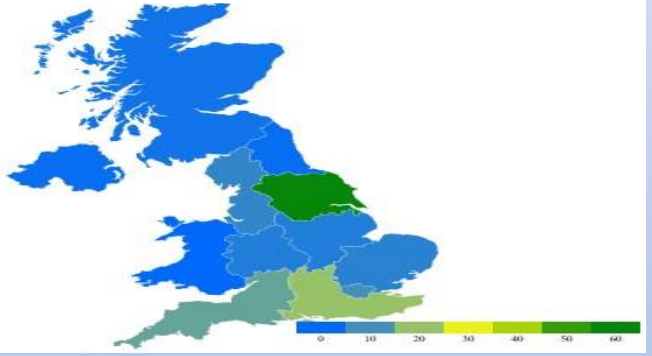
Methods

A survey was distributed to three clinical groups in the UK: geriatricians, orthopaedic surgeons and anaesthetists. Associated networks (AoA, Fragility Fracture Network, British Geriatrics Society, British Orthopaedic Society) were contacted for wider distribution. Questions in the survey explored potential issues surrounding peri-operative management (e.g. frequency of delays to theatre and anticipated consequences of this) and required an ordinal response or free-text answers. Free text answers were analysed for common themes.

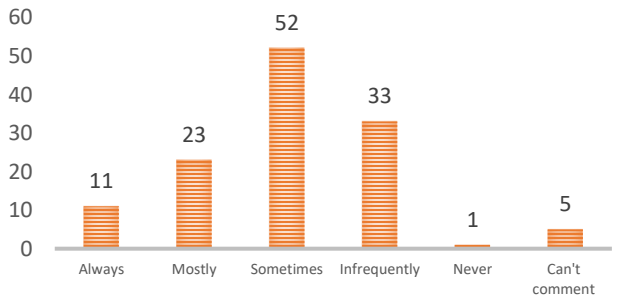
Results

In total, the survey analysed 125 eligible responses: 39.2% were anaesthetists, 44.8% geriatricians, and 17.6% orthopaedic surgeons. 83.2% of the responses were from consultants.

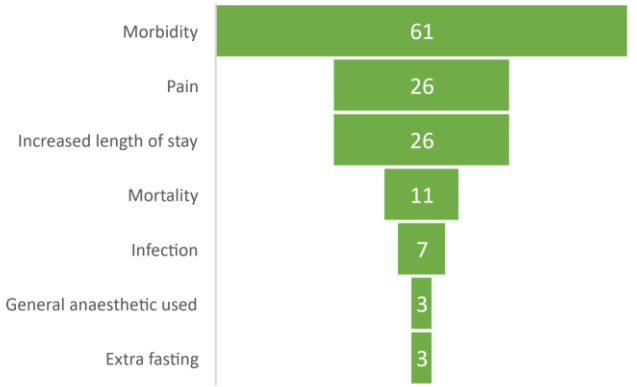
Frequency of responses from each region in the UK



Frequency of delays to theatre



Commonly reported consequences of delays to theatre



Discussion

This survey highlighted that clinicians' experiences surrounding the management of DOACs prior to acute hip fracture surgery is variable. This can be detrimental to the patient and cause greater morbidity. Therefore, the adoption of standardised DOAC advice, such as the 2020 AoA guidance, needs to occur to facilitate prompt surgery in this patient cohort.

Conflicts of interest

One author was involved in the publication of the 2020 AoA guidance.

References

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(3) Mullins B, Akehurst H, Slattery D, Chesser T. Should surgery be delayed in patients taking direct oral anticoagulants who suffer a hip fracture? BMJ Open 2018;8:e020625