

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM

International Consensus Statement

(Guidelines according to scientific evidence)

*Under the auspices of the
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Cyprus Cardiovascular Disease Educational and Research Trust
European Venous Forum
International Surgical Thrombosis Forum
International Union of Angiology and
Union Internationale du Phlebologie.*

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DISCLAIMER

Due to the evolving field of medicine, new research may, in due course, modify the recommendations presented in this document. At the time of publication, every attempt has been made to ensure that the information provided is up to date and accurate. It is the responsibility of the treating physician to determine best treatment for the patient. The authors, committee members, editors, and publishers cannot be held responsible for any legal issues that may arise from citation of this statement.

EVIDENCE AND GRADES OF RECOMMENDATION

We have used the following consistent method for grades of recommendations in keeping with most other guidelines in this area,⁴ and first adopted by our group in 1999.

Grade A recommendations are based on level 1 evidence from randomized controlled trials with consistent results (e.g., in systematic reviews), which are directly applicable to the target population. Single randomized controlled trials have

not been accepted as level 1 even when they were of a high quality and methodologically sound, and have been classified as grade B.⁵⁻⁷

Grade B recommendations are based on level 1 evidence from randomized controlled trials with less consistent results, limited power, or other methodological problems, which are directly applicable to the target population. Grade B recommendations are also based on level 1 evidence from randomized controlled trials extrapolated from a different group of patients to the target population.

Grade C recommendations are based on level 2 evidence from well-conducted observational studies with consistent results, directly applicable to the target population.

Recent proposals that a Grade C+ category be used instead of B for extrapolation from randomized trials and that A, B or C recommendations be prefaced by the grade 1 or 2 according to the balance of benefits, risks and costs made by the “Seventh ACCP Conference of Anti-thrombotic and Thrombolytic Therapy: Evidence-based Guidelines”⁸ have not been used. Developers of national or local guidelines, which include all stakeholders and all relevant healthcare professionals, the public, patients, and healthcare funders, make such judgements more appropriately.

Only fully published, peer-reviewed papers of directly randomized comparisons for each prophylactic method have been used to determine risk reduction (Tables X-XXI) Non-randomized comparisons of outcome in different trials such as those reported by Colditz et al,⁹ Mohr et al,¹⁰ and Imperiale and Speroff¹¹ have not been included as they are potentially biased.

The relationship between the incidence of asymptomatic and the incidence of symptomatic VTE including PE has been known for some time.¹²⁻¹⁴ Reduction in the incidence of asymptomatic DVT has recently been shown to be accompanied by a corresponding reduction for symptomatic DVT.^{15,16} Demonstration that asymptomatic below knee DVT is associated with subsequent development of the post-thrombotic syndrome¹⁷ also validates adoption of surrogate endpoints for efficacy evaluation. Thus, evidence is presented for surrogate outcomes such as the incidence of asymptomatic DVT at screening as well as clinical outcomes (symptomatic DVT or PE) depending on availability of data.

This document presents the evidence in a concise format and attempts to indicate not only the magnitude of the effect of different prophylactic regimens but also the quality of the studies. Information on safety (clinically relevant bleeding and other adverse effects) is also provided. When randomized controlled studies are not available, the lack of data is stated and recommendations for the design of appropriate studies are made.

Regulatory bodies in Europe and North America now consider the various LMWHs to be distinct drug products. They require clinical validation for specific indications for each drug and that each LMWH must be dosed according to the

manufacturer's label and recommendations. Therapeutic interchange among these products is not appropriate. The choice of LMWH should reflect the level of clinical evidence and the approval of the regulatory authorities for each indication. This is emphasized throughout the document.

Finally, evidence has been provided for and reference has been made to methods of prevention that are rarely or no longer used or the drug has been withdrawn (dextran, antiplatelet therapy, dihydroergotamine, melagatran/ximelagatran) in order to provide a complete picture to the clinicians and researchers who are new in the field. The reasons for no longer recommending these drugs have been stated.

GLOSSARY

APTC: Antiplatelet trialist's collaboration
COC: Combined oral contraceptives
CVD: Chronic venous disease
CVI: Chronic venous insufficiency
DVT: Deep vein thrombosis
FIT: Foot impulse technology
FUT: Fibrinogen uptake test
GEC: Graduated elastic compression
HIT: Heparin induced thrombocytopenia
HRT: Hormone replacement therapy
IPC: Intermittent pneumatic compression
LDUH: Low dose unfractionated heparin
LMWH: Low molecular weight heparin
PE: Pulmonary embolism
Proximal DVT: DVT in popliteal or more proximal veins
PTS: Post-thrombotic syndrome
RCOG: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
RR: Relative risk
THR: Total hip replacement
TKR: Total knee replacement
UFH: Unfractionated heparin
VTE: Venous thromboembolism
VKA: Vitamin K antagonists
WHO: World Health Organization

THE PROBLEM AND THE NEED FOR PREVENTION

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) are major health problems with potential serious outcomes. Acutely, PE may be fatal. In the long term, pulmonary hypertension can develop from recurrent PE. Often overlooked is post-thrombotic chronic venous insufficiency (CVI) occurring as a result of DVT causing deep venous reflux or obstruction with skin changes and ulceration with adverse impact on quality of life and escalation of health care costs. In North America and Europe, the annual incidence is approximately 160 per 100,000 for DVT, 20 per 100,000 for symptomatic non-fatal PE and 50 per 100,000 for fatal autopsy-detected PE.¹⁸⁻²³ The prevalence of venous ulceration is at least 300 per 100,000 and approximately 25% are due to DVT.^{24,25} Estimates of the overall annual costs of CVI vary from 600-900 million € (US\$720 million-1 billion) in Western European countries^{26,27}, representing 1-2% of the total health care budget, to 2.5 billion € (US\$3 billion) in the USA.²⁸

Virchow's triad of factors that predispose to VTE are venous stasis, alterations in blood constituents, and changes in the endothelium; these are as true today as when postulated in the 19th century. It is often necessary for at least two factors to coexist for VTE to occur. Principal clinical predisposing influences are immobilization, trauma, surgery, infection and the post-partum period.²⁹ Other predisposing influences are age, obesity, malignancy, previous history of venous thrombosis, varicose veins, dehydration and hormone therapy.^{23,30-39} In the background for all of these is predisposition due to thrombophilia.⁴⁰ The type of risk factor, whether acute or persistent, determines the type and duration of therapy.

Patients admitted to hospital are particularly at risk for VTE and the problem continues after discharge.^{16,41-44} Without prophylaxis, the incidence of DVT is high (Tables I-IV)

Although VTE is an appealing target for maximally effective prophylaxis, this goal has been difficult to achieve. Renewed efforts to educate should maximize utilization, coupled with a system of incentives, warnings, and, where feasible, computerized electronic alerts.⁴⁴

GENERAL AND VASCULAR SURGICAL PATIENTS

THE RISK

Patients who undergo non-orthopedic operative procedures are at risk of developing VTE (Tables I-IV)^{9,45-49} The risk is increased by age, obesity, malignancy, prior history of venous thrombosis, varicose veins, and thrombophilic states. It is also affected by the nature and duration of the operation, type of anesthesia, immobility, dehydration and sepsis.^{30-34,177,178} Known clinical risk factors allow for classification of patients into high, medium or low risk of developing VTE (Tables VI and VII)

Studies in patients having abdominal or pelvic surgery^{41,180,181} demonstrate that the risk continues after discharge from hospital. Further studies are needed before recommendations can be made on the optimal duration of prophylaxis.

Despite the use of intra-operative heparin or other perioperative antithrombotic substances, vascular surgical patients are at moderate risk. The incidence of postoperative asymptomatic DVT is of the order of 18% in patients having abdominal vascular surgery and 15% for those having peripheral vascular reconstruction (Table I). The reported incidence of proximal DVT in patients having abdominal vascular reconstruction is 4-6%.^{139,141} The incidence of symptomatic VTE within 90 days of major elective or urgent vascular procedures has been found to be 1.7% to 2.8% in one study.¹⁸² A large prospective European registry of vascular surgical procedures showed that the incidence of clinical DVT was 0.9% following aortic procedures and 0.7% following femoro-distal bypass operations.¹⁸³

The risk of VTE in patients undergoing laparoscopic surgery appears to be low. Three small prospective studies in which no prophylaxis was used showed an incidence of DVT detected by duplex ultrasound or venography in the range of 0-2%.^{184,185} Other prospective studies in which some form of prophylaxis was used confirmed the low incidence¹⁸⁶⁻¹⁹⁰ with the exception of one in which 11 of 20 patients developed DVT.¹⁹¹ Large series from surveys,¹⁹²⁻¹⁹⁴ registries,¹⁹⁵⁻¹⁹⁸ a literature review¹⁹⁹ and a population study¹⁸² indicate that the risk for clinical post-operative VTE after laparoscopic procedures is less than 1%. The use of prophylaxis in these studies is not reported in detail, but there appears to be a wide variation from none to LMWH in 80% of patients in some hospitals.

Obesity is an independent risk factor for sudden post-operative fatal PE^{200,201}. Bariatric surgery is associated with clinical VTE in 1.2% and with fatal PE in 0.3% of cases.²⁰²

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

In the 1970s, **low dose unfractionated heparin (LDUH)** (5000 IU 8 or 12 hourly subcutaneously) was found to reduce both DVT (Level I evidence) and fatal PE.²⁰³⁻²⁰⁵ During the late 1980s, two published meta-analyses concerning prophylaxis with LDUH compared with no prophylaxis or placebo^{46,47} showed that the incidence of asymptomatic DVT was reduced from 22% to 9% (RR 0.41; 95% CI 0.35 to 0.47) and fatal PE from 0.8% to 0.3% (RR 0.39; 95% CI 0.17 to 0.87). The price was a small increase in bleeding complications from 3.8% to 5.9% (RR 1.56; 95% CI 1.21 to 1.99).

A multicenter study has found that **low molecular weight heparin (LMWH)** not only reduces the incidence of fatal PE but also the overall surgical mortality as compared to controls without prophylaxis.²⁰⁶ Two small randomized placebo-controlled trials in patients having major oncological abdominal surgery²⁰⁷ and

emergency abdominal surgery²⁰⁸ demonstrated the effect of LMWH in reducing asymptomatic DVT.

Sixteen studies have compared LMWH with LDUH,²⁰⁹⁻²²³ and six studies compared different doses of LDUH or LMWH^{214,225-229}

Nine meta-analyses and systematic reviews have compared LMWH with LDUH.²³⁰⁻²³⁸ There are some differences between the meta-analyses regarding selection of publications. Four of the meta-analyses reported that there was no difference in total mortality comparing LMWH with LDUH.^{231,233-235} Two meta-analyses reported reduced incidence of symptomatic PE with LMWH from 0.70% to 0.31% (RR 0.43; 95% CI 0.33 to 0.54)^{231,233} and one showed a decrease of symptomatic VTE.²³⁵ The overall conclusion is that there is no large difference between LMWH and LDUH, but the latter has to be given 2-3 times daily whereas LMWH is administered once daily.

LMWHs have a lower risk of HIT than LDUH.^{239,240} High dose LMWH is more effective but is associated with a higher incidence of hemorrhagic complications than LDUH, whereas a low dose of LMWH has a similar efficacy but with less bleeding.²³³

Regulatory bodies in Europe and North America now consider the various LMWHs to be distinct drug products. They require clinical validation for specific indications for each drug. Therapeutic interchange among these products is not appropriate.

In a recent double-blind double-placebo randomized study in 2927 (2048 evaluable) patients having high risk major abdominal surgery, fondaparinux 2.5 mg daily was at least as effective as perioperative LMWH (dalteparin 5000 u daily) in preventing venographically detected DVT without any increase in bleeding.²⁴¹

In the meta-analysis by Clagett and Reisch,⁴⁶ **dextran** was also analysed and was found to reduce the incidence of fatal PE (RR 0.22; 95% CI 0.11 to 0.44) although the effect of dextran on DVT was relatively small (RR 0.76; 95% CI 0.64 to 0.91). The preventive effect of dextran on fatal PE has been updated and verified.²⁴² It appears that fibrin formed in the presence of dextran is not cross-linked so that it is easily lysed by the body's natural fibrinolytic activity.^{243,244} However, dextran has inherent risks of fluid overload and anaphylactoid reactions⁴⁶ and its routine daily use has been abandoned. Currently, the administration of one peri-operative infusion is considered effective in short-stay surgery and is used by some centres in patients where prophylaxis is considered indicated.

Graduated elastic compression (GEC) stockings reduce the incidence of asymptomatic DVT by approximately 50-60% as shown by several studies (Table VIII) and three systematic reviews,²⁵²⁻²⁵⁴ but the number of patients studied has been too small to assess the effects on PE.

Intermittent pneumatic compression (IPC) (Table IX) reduces the incidence of asymptomatic DVT by approximately 69% (95% CI 58% to 77%) but the number

of patients studied has been too small to assess the effects on PE.

Aspirin reduces DVT by 30% (Table X) and PE by 50% (Table XI)

Combined modalities. Evidence from randomized controlled studies shows that combinations of prophylactic methods are more effective than using each method singly. These include LDUH with GEC (Tables XII and XIII), LDUH and antiplatelet agents,¹⁷⁰ LDUH and IPC,^{246,263} dextran and GEC,²⁶⁹ GEC and IPC,^{270,271} and LDUH and dihydroergotamine which is no longer manufactured or used because of the risk of vasospasm.²⁷²⁻²⁷⁹ However, the number of studies is relatively small for some combinations and more are needed, particularly in high-risk patients. A randomized study involving 2551 patients undergoing cardiac surgery has demonstrated a reduction in the incidence of PE from 4% in the LDUH group to 1.5% in the group receiving LDUH combined with IPC (RR 0.37 95% CI 0.22 to 0.63).²⁸⁰

In the majority of studies, the duration of prophylaxis has been for 5-7 days. However, several studies suggest that the risk continues after discharge from hospital.^{41,180,281,282} Extended prophylaxis to one month reduces asymptomatic DVT further by approximately 50-70%.^{229,283,284} However, further studies are needed to determine the optimum duration of prophylaxis beyond one week in different groups of patients.

In a review of members of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, 95% of the surgeons routinely used some form of thromboprophylaxis.²⁸⁵ In one study, a higher dose of LMWH in combination with GEC and IPC was associated with fewer thrombotic events compared to a lower dose group alone (0.6% vs 5.7%). Bleeding was rare occurring in 2/481 patients.²⁸⁶

Recommendations

Low-risk patients are those without risk factors undergoing minor surgery. The data are insufficient to make any recommendations. On the basis of risk/benefit ratio and extrapolation from studies in moderate-risk patients, it is the practice in some countries to use **GEC stockings** in addition to early ambulation and adequate hydration (**Grade C**).

Moderate-risk patients are those over the age of 40 years undergoing major surgery for benign disease. The use of **LDUH** 5000 IU commenced pre-operatively and continued twice or three times daily, or **LMWH** initiated and dosed according to manufacturers recommendations for moderate-risk patients are recommended (**Grade A**). An alternative method, especially in patients at risk for or with active bleeding, is **IPC with GEC compression used continuously until the patient is ambulant (Grade A)**.

High-risk patients are those aged over 60 years with additional risk factors. **LDUH** (5000 IU commenced two hours before operation and continued post-operatively three times a day) (**Grade A**) or **LMWH** initiated and dosed according

to the manufacturer's recommendations are recommended (**Grade A**). Both may be combined with mechanical methods (**GEC or IPC**) (**Grade B**). **Fondaparinux** (one study) is a **grade B** recommendation.

These recommendations are extrapolated to patients undergoing vascular or bariatric surgical procedures in the absence of evidence from prospective clinical trials (**Grade C**). **GEC** is contraindicated in patients with lower limb ischemia (**Grade C**).

Laparoscopic surgery for major prolonged procedures will reduce venous flow in the legs and activate blood coagulation.^{186,199} Prophylactic subcutaneous LDUH, LMWH, or IPC with GEC are recommended only in patients with additional risk factors (**Grade C**).

UROLOGIC SURGERY

THE RISK

In the 1970s, the incidence of DVT in the absence of prophylaxis was found to be 32% in patients having retropubic prostatectomy and 9% in patients having transurethral resection (Table I). The incidence of symptomatic VTE is currently in the range of 1-5% and PE is the most common cause of postoperative death.^{182,287,288}

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

One small randomized study demonstrated that IPC was effective in preventing silent DVT when compared with UFH or no prophylaxis¹¹² (RR 0.27; 95% CI 0.14 to 0.52). LDUH was effective in reducing asymptomatic DVT in three randomized studies in which the control groups did not have prophylaxis (RR 0.22; 95% CI 0.11 to 0.47).^{113,117,289} A large study of 579 patients having radical prostatectomy did not find any difference in the number of pelvic lymphocoeles or blood loss between those receiving LDUH and those not having prophylaxis.²⁹⁰ LMWH has not been studied by randomized controlled studies and there are no studies for patients having transurethral resection.

Recommendations

IPC with GEC is recommended based on one randomized study and by extrapolation from trials in patients having general surgery (**Grade B**). **LDUH** (**Grade A**) giving 5000 IU commenced 2 hours before operation and continued three times a day in the postoperative period is recommended. An alternative is **LMWH** initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations by extrapolation from general surgery (**Grade C**).

GYNECOLOGY

THE RISK

Thromboembolic complications after gynecological surgery occur with approximately the same frequency as for general surgery. Patients undergoing major gynecological surgery (e.g. over thirty minutes duration) aged 40 years or over have a significant risk of postoperative VTE (Table I). This risk will increase with additional risk factors such as obesity, previous VTE, malignancy or immobility. However, the incidence appears to be much lower for benign gynecological surgery and vaginal procedures (Table I). PE is a leading cause of death following gynecological cancer surgery²⁹¹ and accounts for approximately 20% of perioperative hysterectomy deaths.²⁹² Risk factors for DVT include those listed for general surgery.^{293,294}

An additional risk for VTE is the use of estrogen containing **combined oral contraceptives (COC)**,²⁹⁵ which are used by 18% of women in a UK study.²⁹⁶ COC increase the risk of VTE.²⁹⁵ However, the absolute risk is small and represents an increase from 5 to 15-30 per 100,000 women years.²⁹⁷ The latter is lower than the risk of pregnancy, which is estimated at 100 cases per 100,000 maternities. The risk of postoperative VTE showed an increase from 0.5% to 1% for pill users versus non-users in early studies.²⁹⁸ The absolute excess risk in COC users has to be balanced against the risk of stopping the pill four to six weeks before surgery which includes unwanted pregnancy, the effects of surgery and anesthesia on a pregnancy, and the risks of subsequent termination. Each case should be assessed in relation to additional risk factors. Before major surgery, COC should be discontinued for at least four weeks and alternative contraception advised. If it is elected not to discontinue COC then the patient should receive prophylaxis as if for at least a moderate-risk patient. Other estrogen-containing preparations should be considered to carry the same risk as COC at least until studies become available. In emergency surgery or when COC have not been discontinued, VTE prophylaxis should be given at least as moderate-risk category. COC do not need to be discontinued before minor surgery without immobilisation. Progestogen-only oral contraceptives need not be discontinued even when immobilisation is expected.²⁹⁹

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) should be included as a risk factor for VTE when assessing patients for elective or emergency surgery.³⁰⁰ HRT does not need to be stopped routinely prior to surgery provided that appropriate thromboprophylaxis is used such as LDUH or LMWH.³⁰¹ Transdermal HRT has less effect on blood coagulation and appears to have a lower VTE risk than oral HRT.³⁰²

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Low-risk patients: A level I study²⁵⁰ demonstrated a lower DVT rate with the use of GEC (0 vs 4%; $p < 0.05$). On the basis of this study, the risk-benefit ratio, and extrapolation from data from moderate-risk patients, graduated elastic compression stockings should be used in addition to early ambulation and adequate hydration (**Grade B**).

Moderate-risk patients: Subcutaneous **LDUH** (5000 IU, 12 hourly)^{150,152,303; 130} or **LMWH** (initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations)^{304,305} are effective for preventing DVT.

IPC has been shown to be as effective as LDUH or LMWH for preventing DVT when used continuously for five days^{129,257,306} with no bleeding complications.³⁰⁶ Thus, in patients with a high risk of bleeding, IPC can be used as an alternative to heparin prophylaxis until the patient is ambulatory.

Laparoscopic surgery for major prolonged procedures will reduce venous flow in the legs and activate blood coagulation.^{186,199} Prophylactic subcutaneous LDUH, LMWH, or IPC combined with GEC are recommended only in patients with additional risk factors (**Grade C**).

High-risk patients: **LMWH**^{130,210,305,306} initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations or **IPC** (throughout hospital stay)¹²⁹ are equally effective. Randomized controlled studies in patients having gynecologic oncology surgery have shown no difference in efficacy between LMWH and LDUH given three times a day for thromboprophylaxis against DVT or PE and no difference in the risk of bleeding.^{210,307-309} The risk of wound hematomas appears to be reduced by avoiding subcutaneous injection near the wound. LMWH has the advantage of once daily injection and is less likely to cause HIT.

Recommendations

Low-risk patients: They should receive **GEC** (**Grade B**) in addition to early ambulation and adequate hydration.

Moderate-risk patients: **LDUH** (5000 IU, 12 hourly), **LMWH** (initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations) or **IPC** are **Grade A** recommendations. **LMWH** is the preferred method because it has the advantage of once daily injection and is less likely to cause HIT. **IPC** is the method of choice in patients with a high risk of bleeding.

High-risk patients: **LMWH** (initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations) (**Grade A**), **LDUH** (5000 IU 8 hourly) (**Grade A**) or **IPC** (throughout hospital stay) (**Grade B**) are recommended. **LMWH** or **LDUH** combined with **IPC** or **GEC** stockings provides optimal prophylaxis (**Grade B**).

OBSTETRICS

THE RISK

Pregnancy is a risk factor for VTE with a tenfold increase compared with the risk for non-pregnant women. The time of greatest risk is the puerperium. PE remains the leading direct cause of maternal deaths in the UK.³¹⁰ Additional risk factors for VTE in pregnancy and the puerperium include obesity, age over 35 years, thrombophilic states, Caesarean section and surgical procedures during pregnancy and the puerperium.³¹¹ Risk assessment for VTE is recommended for all women in early pregnancy.³¹⁰

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

The Cochrane Review of VTE prophylaxis in pregnancy and the puerperium examined 8 trials involving 649 women. It was not possible to assess the effects of interventions because of the limited number of trials and the small sample sizes.³¹² Large scale randomized trials of currently used interventions are required.

Table XIV summarises management strategies for various clinical situations.

Women at high risk of VTE including those with previous confirmed VTE should be offered pre-pregnancy counselling to agree to a management plan. The thrombotic risk exists from the beginning of pregnancy.

Women with previous VTE or a strong family history of VTE, particularly where VTE occurs at a young age (<50 years) should be screened for inherited and acquired thrombophilia before pregnancy (Grade C). Ideally, all women should undergo assessment of risk factors for VTE in early pregnancy or before pregnancy. This assessment should be repeated if the woman is admitted to a hospital with complications such as hyperemesis or pre-eclampsia that requires bed rest (Grade C).

Systematic reviews and retrospective studies have concluded that **LMWH** is now the treatment of choice in pregnancy compared to UH in view of efficacy and safety³¹³⁻³¹⁷ (Grade B). The risks of HIT and osteoporosis during pregnancy are reduced with LMWH as compared with LDUH.^{318,319}

The overall risk of recurrence of DVT during pregnancy has been reported as 2.0-3.0%³²⁰ and is higher in those with an underlying thrombophilia or idiopathic thrombosis (6%). A further study reported a recurrence rate per 100 patient-years 10.9% during and 3.7% outside pregnancy.³²¹ **Thus, women in whom a previous VTE occurred in association with a temporary risk factor that is no longer present and no known thrombophilia or additional risk factors should be offered post-partum thromboprophylaxis with LMWH (Grade C). GEC stockings during pregnancy should be considered in addition to postpartum prophylaxis (Grade C).** Women in whom a previous VTE was estrogen-related

(pregnancy or the combined contraceptive pill), or additional risk factors are present such as obesity should be started with thromboprophylaxis with **LMWH as early as possible in pregnancy (Grade C)**.

Women with thrombophilias have an increased risk of VTE in pregnancy and the risk varies with the specific thrombophilia. **Women with previous VTE and thrombophilia should be offered thromboprophylaxis with LMWH antenatally and throughout the six weeks postpartum (Grade B)**.

Women who are on long-term anticoagulant thromboprophylaxis for VTE and women with anti-thrombin deficiency are at very high risk (30%) during pregnancy. **Those on vitamin K antagonists should be advised to switch to LMWH as soon as pregnancy is confirmed because of the risk of embryopathy from warfarin between the 6th and 12th week of pregnancy. In both situations, LMWH dosage should be similar to that used for the treatment of VTE (Grade B)**.

Table XV shows the most recent RCOG guidelines³⁰¹ for recommended **LMWH dosage in pregnancy**. Further reports since this guideline was published suggest that a once-daily dosage of tinzaparin provides adequate 24-hour cover^{322,323} but more studies are needed concerning its safety and especially the risk of osteoporosis.

Women with a previous VTE and a thrombophilia such as protein C deficiency, Factor V Leiden, Prothrombin 20210A or protein S deficiency who are at moderately increased risk of VTE should receive LMWH (e.g. enoxaparin 40mg daily, dalteparin 5000 units daily or tinzaparin 4500 units daily in women of normal body weight) from early pregnancy (Grade C).

Women with no personal history of venous thrombosis but who have a thrombophilic defect identified may require thromboprophylaxis. This will depend on the type of thrombophilia, the family history, and the presence of additional risk factors (e.g. obesity, immobilisation and hyperemesis). All should be offered anticoagulant prophylaxis following delivery. **The risk of thrombosis should be discussed with the patient antenatally and GEC stockings should be considered (Grade C)**.

Women with **antiphospholipid antibody syndrome** (lupus anticoagulant or anticardiolipin antibodies) and recurrent miscarriages should receive thromboprophylaxis with **unfractionated heparin and low dose aspirin (75mg/day)**^{324,325} from the time of diagnosis of pregnancy (**Grade A**). Although such therapy is aimed at preventing pregnancy loss that is related to placental thrombosis, these women are at risk for VTE and prophylaxis with **LMWH should continue for at least 2 to 5 days after delivery**.³⁰¹ **In women with antiphospholipid syndrome and previous VTE, postpartum prophylaxis should be continued for six weeks (Grade C)**.

Delivery and the puerperium:

Management of delivery: Patients on LMWH antenatally and who wish epidural

anesthesia should have heparin prophylaxis discontinued with the onset of labour. An epidural or spinal block is not advised for at least twelve hours after prophylactic LMWH administration and 24 hours after therapeutic doses have been discontinued.³²⁶ LMWH should not be given for at least four hours after the epidural catheter has been inserted or removed and the catheter should not be removed within 10 to 12 hours of the most recent injection.³²⁷ For delivery by elective Caesarean section, the woman should receive a thromboprophylactic dose of LMWH on the day before delivery. On the day of delivery the thromboprophylactic dose of LMWH should be given three hours postoperatively or four hours after removal of the epidural catheter (Grade C).

Management of the puerperium: In addition to previous VTE and thrombophilias, other risk factors should be considered for postpartum prophylaxis: age over 35 years, obesity, Caesarean section (particularly an emergency procedure during labour), gross varicose veins, pre-eclampsia and immobilisation (Grade C).

Postpartum thromboprophylaxis is recommended in women with previous VTE, known thrombophilias and other thrombotic risk factors. The first postpartum daily dose of subcutaneous LMWH (enoxaparin 40mg, dalteparin 5000 units daily or tinzaparin 50 U/g) should be given three to four hours after delivery. Postpartum anticoagulation should be continued for a minimum of six weeks in patients with previous VTE or thrombophilia. In other patients, prophylaxis should continue until discharge from hospital, and the need for prophylaxis should be reviewed if the hospital stay continues beyond five days (Grade B).

If a patient does not wish to continue on self-injections of LMWH, **vitamin K antagonists** can be commenced on the first or second postpartum day. LMWH can be discontinued when the INR has been within the target range of 2.0 - 3.0 for two consecutive days. **GEC stockings** can be added to **LMWH** in high-risk patients and should be used where LMWH is contraindicated. **Where anticoagulants are contraindicated, GEC stockings should be worn for at least six weeks following delivery and can be combined with 75mg of Aspirin daily (Grade C).**

Patients who develop VTE during pregnancy or the puerperium should be referred for hematological screening to determine if they have underlying thrombophilia and counselled about the increased risk of COC pills. Progestogen-only contraception is suitable for these women. They should also be counselled about the need for prophylactic treatment in any future pregnancy.

Breast feeding is not contraindicated with either LMWH, unfractionated heparin or warfarin (Grade C).^{328,329}

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY AND TRAUMA

(A) ELECTIVE HIP REPLACEMENT

THE RISK

In the absence of prophylaxis, patients undergoing elective major joint replacement and those with hip fracture have a DVT risk of approximately 50% (Table I).³³⁰⁻³³² The frequencies of proximal DVT (Table II) and PE (Tables III and IV) are also high. Symptomatic events range from 2-5%.³³³ Studies on clinical DVT and PE indicate a postoperative risk period of approximately 3 months^{331,333,334} (Table V). Recent mortality studies have confirmed a reduced survival for 2-3 months following elective total hip replacement (THR) surgery with the highest death rate initially early after operation.^{335,336}

There is a high incidence of proximal DVT (18-36%) in patients having THR^{64,67,68,70,73,337-340} in contrast to patients having TKR in whom the preponderance of thrombosis is distal.^{83-85,341,342}

Modern THR surgery is performed with a continuing reduction in hospital stay (3-6 days) so that patients are discharged while still at risk. Thus, the majority of clinical events appear after hospital discharge, giving a false impression of a decreasing problem.^{182,334}

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

The majority of studies in elective orthopedic surgery have been carried out on elective THR patients. Prophylactic methods that have been investigated include aspirin, dextran, fixed LDUH, adjusted dose unfractionated heparin, fixed LDUH with dihydroergotamine (no longer manufactured), LMWH, heparinoid, recombinant hirudin, the direct thrombin inhibitor melagatran (withdrawn due to hepatotoxicity) fixed mini-dose and adjusted doses of vitamin K antagonists, GEC stockings, IPC and foot impulse technology (FIT). To determine the risk reduction for each prophylactic method, only randomized studies with systematic screening tests for DVT are used for this analysis (Tables X, XI, XVI-XVIII).

LDUH (5000 IU 8 or 12 hourly) was found to be effective for reducing DVT from 46.8% to 23.3% (RR 0.50; 95% CI 0.43 to 0.58) (meta-analysis of 20 randomized controlled studies - Level I evidence)⁴⁷ in patients having elective THR and was the method of choice in the 1980s.

It has since been demonstrated that **LMWH** is superior to unfractionated heparin for elective THR surgery reducing DVT from 21.2% to 13.8% (RR 0.66; 95% CI 0.52 to 0.84) and PE from 4.1% to 1.7% (RR 0.40; 95% CI 0.19 to 0.84)^{231,232,234,236,340,359-363} (Level I evidence). Thus, **LDUH** is no longer recommended.

As indicated in the section on “General Surgery”, regulatory bodies in Europe and North America now consider the various LMWHs to be distinct drug products. They require clinical validation for specific indications for each drug. Therapeutic interchange among these products is not appropriate.

Randomized controlled studies have shown that **recombinant hirudin** is more effective than LDUH³⁶⁴⁻³⁶⁶ or LMWH.³⁶⁵ Of 2079 patients studied, 1587 were included in the primary efficacy analysis. Overall, DVT was reduced with hirudin 15mg twice daily compared with 40mg enoxaparin from 25.5% to 18.45% (p=0.001; RRR 28.0%). The safety profile was the same in both groups.³⁶⁵

Several randomized controlled trials have compared **vitamin K antagonists** with LMWH. LMWH was found to be more effective^{355,356,367,368} or at least as effective³⁵⁸ in the prevention of asymptomatic DVT. However, this was at the expense of a slight increase in hemorrhagic complications. When LMWH was started before or immediately after surgery, there was a marked reduction of proximal DVT from 3% to 0.8% (RR 0.28; 95% CI 0.10 to 0.74).³⁶⁹ Symptomatic DVT was also reduced from 4.4% in the warfarin group to 1.5% in the LMWH group (RR 0.32; 95% CI 0.12 to 0.88). A recent meta-analysis of vitamin K antagonists in orthopedic surgery³⁷⁰ showed a RR of 0.56 (95% CI 0.37 to 0.84) for DVT and 0.23 for PE (95% CI 0.09 to 0.59) compared with placebo. VKA were less effective than LMWH in preventing total DVT (RR 1.51; 95% CI 1.27 to 1.79) and proximal DVT (RR 1.51; 95% CI 1.04 to 2.17) although the risk of wound hematoma was increased from 3.3% in the VKA recipients to 5.3% in LMWH recipients (RR 2.29; 95% CI 1.09 to 7.75).

In a recent clinical trial on THR patients,³⁷¹ 1279 patients were randomized on the third postoperative day to LMWH or to warfarin for the subsequent 6 weeks. The primary endpoint was the overall clinical failure rate i.e. symptomatic VTE (radiologically confirmed), major hemorrhage or deaths. The failure rate was 3.7% in the LMWH group and 8.3% in the warfarin group (p=0.01). Major bleeding occurred in 1.4% in the LMWH group and in 5.5% in the warfarin group. It appears that reduced bleeding seen initially after surgery due to the slow onset of action for warfarin is offset by long-term increased bleeding. Furthermore, national drug registries have shown warfarin to be a major cause of readmission and fatal bleeding.^{372,373} With these data, and because of the need for monitoring, the small therapeutic window and the risk of drug interactions, some surgeons find it difficult to see an advantage for vitamin K antagonists over LMWH.

In contrast to LMWH, the pentasaccharide **fondaparinux**, is a pure synthetic chemical compound. It is a potent indirect inhibitor of factor Xa and acts by a catalytic effect facilitating antithrombin binding to activated factor X and represents one of many attributes of heparins. The drug is administered by subcutaneous injection once daily. It has been registered internationally for major orthopedic surgery. Two large randomized controlled trials compared fondaparinux to

enoxaparin.^{374,375} Reduction of asymptomatic DVT was 26% (RR 0.74 95% CI 0.47 to 0.89) and symptomatic PE was 56% (RR 0.44 95% CI 0.27 to 0.66) with fondaparinux. For the two studies combined, the incidence of major bleeding was 3% in the fondaparinux and 2.1% in the enoxaparin patients ($p > 0.05$). Fondaparinux may accumulate and increase bleeding in patients with impaired renal function.

A meta-analysis in the early 1990s¹⁷⁰ demonstrated that **antiplatelet therapy** in elective hip surgery is only moderately effective for protection against DVT (RR 0.70; 95% CI 0.61 to 0.82) (Table X) but the observed reduction in the risk of PE was substantial (RR 0.49; 95% CI 0.26 to 0.92) (Table XI). However, the recent PEP study^{262,376} showed that aspirin is not as valuable as the meta-analysis suggested. Over 13,000 hip fracture patients were randomized to have either aspirin or placebo. The overall death rate was identical in each group. Risk reduction for symptomatic VTE was from 2.5% to 1.6% and this was only one-half of that expected from LMWH and one-third from pentasaccharide. The reduced risk of VTE was matched by an increased risk of blood transfusion, gastro-intestinal bleeding and wound bleeding. In a supplementary group of 4000 elective hip and knee replacement patients, there was an insignificant difference in symptomatic VTE.³⁷⁶ The relative weak thrombophylactic effect of aspirin therefore carries an alternative complication rate and its use might deprive patients of safer or more effective prophylaxis.

The Cochrane database²⁵⁴ and an earlier metaanalysis²⁵² shows that **graduated elastic compression** is effective in reducing DVT in hospitalised patients, but there are few robust studies specific to orthopedic surgery.^{69,377} In addition, there are disadvantages to graduated elastic compression in trauma cases in which the limb has to be regularly inspected. Because other methods of prevention are more effective, GEC stockings on their own are not recommended.

Intermittent pneumatic compression is effective in patients having THR^{64,68,344} (Table XVI A) reducing DVT from 43.6% in the control groups to 21% in the compression groups (RR 0.48; 95% CI 0.36 to 0.64) (Level I evidence). It offers an alternative for surgeons with concerns or patients with contraindications to chemical prophylaxis. It can also be used as an additional method for those at particularly high risk. In a recent randomized study³⁷⁸ in 131 patients having THR and TKR, the combination of LMWH plus IPC was more effective than LMWH plus GEC stockings (DVT incidence zero versus 28%).

Recent data demonstrate that **foot impulse technology (FIT) combined with graduated elastic compression** is effective in reducing the incidence of proximal DVT in patients having hip or knee replacement (Table XVII) with reduced bleeding and swelling. Direct comparisons with chemical prophylaxis are sparse; there is probably superiority to UFH³⁴⁸ and equivalence with LMWH for THR^{350,379} but not for TKR.³⁵¹

Mechanical methods are intuitively attractive to orthopedic surgeons because of the lack of risk for bleeding. The small number of randomized studies available sets mechanical methods at a disadvantage compared with the considerable number of large studies of chemical prophylaxis. Mechanical methods are generally cumbersome and need supervision from health personnel. Nevertheless, they offer an alternative during the early postoperative period for surgeons with concerns about bleeding or for patients with contraindications to chemical prophylaxis. They may also be used as an additional method for those at particularly high risk³⁷⁸ although this aspect requires confirmation with further studies

Modern technology has made IPC devices light, silent, more portable and more effective in preventing stasis by sensing venous volume so that the compression period follows immediately after venous refilling. In addition, different sleeve designs and materials have been used to improve patient compliance.³⁸⁰

Melagatran is a direct thrombin inhibitor that had been developed for subcutaneous administration and as the prodrug ximelagatran for oral administration. It had been approved for short-term use in orthopedic surgery in some countries. Four randomized controlled studies have compared melagatran/ximelagatran with enoxaparin.³⁸¹⁻³⁸⁴ When melagatran was administered immediately before surgery and on the evening of surgery and then orally twice a day, the incidence of DVT was lower than with enoxaparin that was started the evening before surgery and continued each evening thereafter. In the EXPRESS trial³⁸¹ total VTE was reduced from 26.6% to 20.3% ($p=0.0003$). Fatal bleeding, critical site bleeding and bleeding requiring re-operation did not differ between the two groups. "Excessive" bleeding, i.e. bleeding as subjectively judged by the local investigator was 1.2% with enoxaparin vs 3.1% with melagatran. When the melagatran/ximelagatran regimen was started after operation, the incidence of DVT was lower in the enoxaparin group (METHRO III)³⁸⁴ and bleeding rates were the same in both groups. In a North American study where both oral ximelagatran 24 mg b.d. and enoxaparin 30 mg b.d. were commenced the day after THR surgery and continued for 7 - 12 days, venographic DVT plus symptomatic VTE was detected in 4.6% of the enoxaparin group and 7.9% of the ximelagatran recipients ($p = 0.03$). Major bleeding was less than 1% in both groups.

The melagatran/ximelagatran regimen had been approved by 18 countries across Europe, South America and Asia for short-term prophylaxis in major hip and knee surgery. Because of concerns about an increase in myocardial infarctions, elevation of liver enzymes and a case of fatal liver failure in the long-term studies, the FDA had not given approval. Because of a second case of severe liver damage a week after short-term therapy, melagatran/ximelagatran has been withdrawn from the market and its development terminated (<http://www.astrazeneca.com/pressrelease/5217.aspx>).

Meta-analysis shows that **spinal and epidural anesthesia** reduce both

thromboembolism and perhaps mortality in hip fractures,^{385,386} and TKR.³⁸⁷⁻³⁸⁹ This method does not reduce risk sufficiently on its own, but should be regarded as a useful adjunct. Initial European experience suggested that neuraxial anesthesia could be safely used in the presence of LMWH.³⁹⁰ However, more recently there have been concerns that a spinal hematoma may develop on very rare occasions.^{391,392} Guidelines have been suggested.^{327,393} LMWH (or pentasaccharide) can be given safely four hours after removal of the epidural catheter (see pregnancy). However, LMWH or pentasaccharide should be avoided whilst a continuous postoperative neuraxial block is in place. The catheter should not be inserted until serum levels of the chemical agent used are at their lowest. This means that postoperative administration of the agent is, generally, safer and more predictable than pre-operative administration when epidural analgesia is needed.

Timing of prophylaxis

VTE prophylaxis involves a balance of risks and benefits. Chemical prophylaxis poses a dilemma: for a given dose the closer it is administered to surgery, the better the thromboprophylaxis but the greater is the risk of bleeding complications.³⁵⁵ In Europe, LMWH is given at a lower dose prior to operation, providing an anticoagulant effect to counteract the intra-operative activation of coagulation factors and venous stasis. However, if a given dose of the drug is administered too long before surgery then, intra-operative blood levels would be inadequate for effective prophylaxis, whereas if given too close to surgery then surgical bleeding is a threat. In North America, LMWH is given after surgery at a higher dose and more frequently. This should reduce the risk of surgical bleeding, yet intra-operative thrombogenesis is not prevented and thrombi may have already begun forming. The drug is now expected to be therapeutic as well as prophylactic. Therefore, prophylaxis needs to be given close but not too close to surgery.^{369,394}

IPC and FIT sleeves are available in sterile packages that allow their intraoperative use, reducing the risk of bleeding and the time the patient is not under prophylaxis.^{346,395,396}

Duration of prophylaxis in elective orthopedic surgery

Studies in patients having THR^{174,181,331,334,355,397-401} demonstrate that there is prolonged risk with 45-80% of all symptomatic events occurring after discharge from hospital.^{203,331,402,403}

Randomized controlled studies in patients having THR indicate that **prolonged thromboprophylaxis with LMWH** for up to 35 days is safe and effective irrespective of whether in-hospital prophylaxis was with LMWH or warfarin. It decreases the frequency of venographically detected total DVT, proximal DVT and symptomatic VTE after the seventh day by more than 50%.^{359,401,404-407} Further studies are needed before recommendations can be made for prophylaxis beyond 35 days. The optimal duration of prophylaxis is unknown. Epidemiological data on

postoperative death rates indicate a much longer duration of risk in subgroups such as emergency patients (e.g. hip fracture) and patients with co-morbidity (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis) in which vascular deaths dominate.^{336,408}

One randomized controlled trial compared warfarin prophylaxis (INR 2-3) for nine days with warfarin extended for one month after hospital discharge. VTE occurred in 5.1% of in-hospital prophylaxis patients and 0.5% in those having extended prophylaxis (RR 9.4; 95% CI 1.2 to 73.5).⁴⁰⁹ This study was prematurely terminated because of the superiority of prolonged prophylaxis. As indicated above, it has been subsequently demonstrated that extended prophylaxis with warfarin is associated with more hemorrhagic complications than with LMWH.³⁷¹

Recommendations

LMWH initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations, **fondaparinux, oral anticoagulant therapy, IPC or FIT combined with GEC** are **Grade A** recommendations. The preferred methods are LMWH or fondaparinux for in-hospital prevention. IPC or FIT combined with GEC stockings are an equivalent alternative to LMWH for those surgeons or anesthesiologists concerned about bleeding either in all or in certain patients. These devices can be used as long as tolerated and then replaced with chemical prophylaxis for the rest of the five-week period of risk. **Recombinant hirudin (Revasc)** is approved for short-term prophylaxis in approximately 20 European countries and can be used in patients with HIT (**Grade A**).

Prophylaxis with LMWH should be initiated either before or after operation depending on the adopted regimen (Grade A). Fondaparinux should be started at least 6 to 8 hours after surgery. Prophylaxis should be continued for 4-6 weeks with LMWH (Grade A) or fondaparinux (Grade C-extrapolation from hip fracture trial).

(B) ELECTIVE KNEE JOINT REPLACEMENT

THE RISK

Data from THR should not be extrapolated to TKR. The incidence of asymptomatic DVT detected by venography is higher in patients having TKR than THR. However, the incidence of above knee DVT is lower than in patients having THR (see section on THR above).

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

IPC is effective in patients having knee replacement (RR 0.27; 95% CI 0.14 to 0.49) (Table XVI B). One small study demonstrated that **IPC** reduced the incidence of asymptomatic DVT from 65% to 6%.⁸⁰ A subsequent study found IPC to be more

effective than aspirin.³⁴⁵ IPC was found to be less effective than coumadin for preventing venographically detected DVT (32% vs 19%).⁴¹⁰ FIT was also effective in two studies^{86,342} but showed inferiority when compared to LMWH in two other studies^{351,352} (Table XVII).⁴¹¹

A randomized controlled study demonstrated that **LMWH** was more effective than placebo. It reduced venographically detected DVT from 65% in the placebo group to 19% in the LMWH group (RR 0.30; 95% CI 0.16 to 0.58).⁴¹² Subsequent studies demonstrated that LMWH was more effective than LDUH (RR 0.75; 95% CI 0.58 to 0.92)^{413,414} or warfarin (RR 0.68; 95% CI 0.62 to 0.76) (Table XVIII).

Fondaparinux (2.5 mg sc once daily starting 6 hrs after surgery) was more effective than enoxaparin (30mg sc b.d. starting 12-24 hrs after surgery) in one study.⁴¹⁵ VTE (defined as venographically detected DVT, symptomatic DVT or symptomatic PE) was reduced from 27.8% in the enoxaparin group to 12.5% in the fondaparinux group (RR 0.45; 95% CI 0.32 to 0.62). However, major bleeding was more common with fondaparinux (2.1% vs 0.2 % p = 0.006). This increased rate of bleeding when fondaparinux was given within 6 hrs of surgery was confirmed in a meta-analysis⁴¹⁶ including this study and three other randomized controlled trials comparing fondaparinux with enoxaparin in patients having orthopedic surgery other than TKR.

Subcutaneous **melagatran** followed by oral **ximelagatran** had the same efficacy and safety as LMWH^{382,417}. Three randomized control studies compared oral ximelagatran 24 mg b.d. or 36mg b.d. starting the morning after surgery with adjusted dose warfarin (INR range 1.8 to 3.0) starting on the evening after surgery.⁴¹⁸⁻⁴²⁰ The incidence of DVT was the same in both groups for the 24 mg b.d. dose but the overall VTE or death rate was reduced with the 36 mg b.d. dose. There was no difference in hemorrhagic complications between either dose of ximelagatran and warfarin.

The melagatran/ximelagatran regimen had been approved by 18 countries across Europe, South America and Asia for short-term prophylaxis in major hip and knee surgery. Because of concerns about an increase in myocardial infarctions, elevation of liver enzymes and a case of fatal liver failure in the long-term studies, the FDA had not given approval. Because of a second case of severe liver damage a week after short-term therapy melagatran/ximelagatran has been withdrawn from the market and its development terminated (<http://www.astrazeneca.com/pressrelease/5217.aspx>).

Duration of prophylaxis

The effect of extending prophylaxis using LMWH to 30-42 days beyond hospitalisation on symptomatic DVT in patients having TKR is less (OR 0.74; 95% CI 0.26 to 2.15; p > 0.05) than in patients having THR (OR 0.33; 95% CI 0.19 to 0.56; p < 0.05) as shown by a systematic review.¹⁶

Recommendations

LMWH (initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations) or warfarin (although less effective) are **Grade A** recommendations. **Fondaparinux** is a **Grade B** recommendation (one study). **IPC or FIT plus GEC** stockings are alternative options but more studies are needed (**Grade B**).

(C) HIP FRACTURE SURGERY

THE RISK

Patients having hip fracture surgery have the highest rates of DVT (46-60%)(Tables I, III, IV)^{98,421,422} and fatal PE (2.5-7.5%).^{338,422,423} The VTE risk period lasts for 2-3 months after hip fracture surgery in spite of common short-term prophylaxis^{333,334} and the 90-day risk of overall death is 13%.⁴²⁴ After hip fracture, the risk is greater than the standardised mortality, the majority dying of vascular events despite the fact that most patients receive some form of short-term prophylaxis.^{335,336}

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Because the risks of DVT and PE including fatal PE are high in patients with hip fracture (Tables I, III, IV), prophylaxis should start as soon as possible after diagnosis and should be the same as that recommended for elective hip surgery.

Reduction in asymptomatic DVT has been demonstrated by **IPC** (RR 0.20; 95% CI 0.07 to 0.55)³⁴⁴ (Table XVI) and **FIT** in combination with **GEC**³⁵³ (RR 0.32; 95% CI 0.32 to 0.67) (Table XVII). In the most recent study³⁴³ the combined endpoint of PE and proximal DVT using duplex ultrasound was reduced from 12% in the group without prophylaxis to 4% in the IPC group. More studies are needed.

A meta-analysis¹⁷⁰ demonstrated that **antiplatelet therapy** in traumatic orthopedic surgery is only slightly effective for protection against DVT (RR 0.86; 95% CI 0.73 to 1.0) (Table X) but the observed reduction in the risk of PE is substantial (RR 0.40; 95% CI 0.22 to 0.71) (Table XI). In the randomized, placebo-controlled trial of patients undergoing surgery for hip fracture (13,356 patients) or for elective hip or knee arthroplasty (4088 patients), aspirin in a dose of 160 mg daily started preoperatively was used as the primary prophylactic agent for 35 days. In the patients with hip fracture, aspirin reduced the incidence of symptomatic DVT by 29% (95% CI 3% to 48%; p=0.03) and PE by 43% (95% CI 18% to 60%; p=0.002). PE or DVT was confirmed in 105 (1.6%) of 6679 patients assigned aspirin compared with 165 (2.5%) of 6677 patients assigned placebo, which represents an absolute reduction of 9 per 1000 and a proportional reduction of 36% (95% CI 19% to 50%; p=0.0003). However, the complication rate (transfusion requirements and bleeding) offset much of the reduction in symptomatic VTE. The death rate was equivalent in the placebo and aspirin groups.²⁶² Since other methods are more effective, aspirin on its own is not recommended for routine thromboprophylaxis.

In the 1970s, **LDUH** had been found to be effective in reducing asymptomatic DVT (RR 0.51; 95% CI 0.42 to 0.62) (Table XVII) and although an overview of trials had not demonstrated a significant reduction in total PE, there was a significant reduction in fatal PE.⁴⁷

LMWH has been assessed against placebo,^{70,229} **LDUH**,⁴²⁵ danaparoid,⁴²⁶ high dose (40mg enoxaparin) **LMWH**⁴²⁷ and fondaparinux.⁴²⁸ **LMWH** has been found to be equally effective as **LDUH** without increase in hemorrhagic complications.⁴²⁹

Three randomized controlled trials have demonstrated that **VKA** are effective in preventing asymptomatic DVT with a 61% RR reduction for DVT and 66% for proximal DVT, compared with no prophylaxis.^{98,430,431} The increase in hemorrhagic complications reported varied from zero to 47% without any increased bleeding in the most recent trial.⁹⁸

Fondaparinux given for 11 days was more effective when compared with **LMWH** in reducing VTE from 19.1 % to 8.3% (RR 0.46; 95% CI 0.32 to 0.59) and proximal DVT from 4.3% to 0.9% (RR 0.22; 95% CI 0.09 to 0.53).⁴²⁸ There was no difference in major bleeding but minor bleeding was increased from 2.1 % in the enoxaparin group to 4.1 % in the fondaparinux group (p = 0.02). In a second study, patients who received fondaparinux for 7 days were randomized to continuation with fondaparinux or placebo for a further 3 weeks.⁴³² The incidence of venographic DVT was 1.4% in the extended prophylaxis group and 35.0 % in the placebo group (RR 0.04; 95% CI 0.01 to 0.13). Symptomatic VTE was 0.3% and 2.7% respectively (RR 0.11; 95% CI 0.01 to 0.88). There was no difference in hemorrhagic complications.

Delayed admission to hospital or delayed surgery following hip fractures is associated with a high incidence of DVT developing prior to surgery.⁴³³⁻⁴³⁶ The incidence of pre-operative DVT as shown by venography can be as high as 62% for all DVT and 14% for proximal DVT when the delay is 48 hours or more.⁴³⁶ Thus, it is strongly recommended that if surgical delay is anticipated, prophylaxis with **LDUH** or **LMWH** is commenced as close to the fracture as possible. Prophylaxis should be restarted once post-operative hemostasis has been achieved.

Recommendations

LMWH (initiated and dosed according to the manufacturer's recommendations), **fondaparinux**, **adjusted dose VKA (INR range 2-3)**, or **LDUH** are **Grade A** recommendations. **IPC** or **FIT combined with GEC** should be used when there are contraindications for pharmacological prophylaxis (**Grade B**). **If surgery is likely to be delayed, prophylaxis should be initiated with LMWH or IPC or FIT plus GEC as close to the fracture as possible (Grade C).**

(D) KNEE ARTHROSCOPY

THE RISK

Knee arthroscopy is a very common procedure varying from a simple diagnostic technique to an extensive repair of injured soft tissues. A tourniquet is usually used.

The incidence of DVT in patients undergoing arthroscopic procedures in the absence of prophylaxis as demonstrated by routine venography or duplex ultrasound is approximately 7% for all thrombi and 1.4% for proximal DVT (Table I).^{84,163-168,437} The risk is minimal for diagnostic arthroscopy,^{165,334} but the risk is increased if the tourniquet is applied for more than one hour or if therapeutic arthroscopy is performed.^{163,165}

Symptomatic VTE occurs after arthroscopy without prophylaxis but it is very rare. In a 10-year prospective study, clinical and radiologically confirmed symptomatic DVT occurred in 0.6%.^{165,334} One prospective study found symptomatic PE within 5 weeks after surgery in 1/101 patients who had received LMWH for about two days.⁴³⁸

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

LMWH was effective compared with no prophylaxis in reducing the incidence of ultrasound detected DVT in two blind randomized studies of patients scheduled for arthroscopy, with 239 patients in one¹⁶⁷ and 130 patients in the other.¹⁶⁸ The incidence of DVT was reduced from 8% in the control groups to 1% in the LMWH groups (RR 0.12; 95% CI 0.03 to 0.53). Bleeding complications were not increased.

Thus, although clinical VTE is uncommon and fatalities are rare, the huge number of patients undergoing knee arthroscopy surgery makes VTE complications potentially relatively frequent. There is a clear correlation between age and degree of trauma with VTE.⁸⁴ This justifies prophylaxis in patients with additional risk factors along with prolonged tourniquet application or when extensive surgery beyond a simple diagnostic procedure is performed.

Recommendations

Recommendation for simple diagnostic arthroscopy:

Routine prophylaxis is not recommended unless other risk factors are present (Grade C).

Recommendation for arthroscopic surgery (e.g. ligament reconstructions):

LMWH starting before or after surgery (Grade B) or IPC in the presence of contraindications to LMWH are recommended (Grade C) until full ambulation.

(E) ISOLATED BELOW KNEE INJURIES

THE RISK

Patients with below knee injuries and immobilization have a DVT incidence in the range of 10-35% depending on the type and severity of injury (Table I)¹⁴⁴⁻¹⁴⁹ and carry a risk of clinical PE in the range of 0.4-2.1%.⁴²⁴ The frequency of symptomatic events is unknown.

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

This group is so heterogeneous that studies and recommendations are difficult to devise.

In one study of 253 patients with plaster casts of which the majority had soft tissue injuries, the ultrasonic incidence of DVT at cast removal was reduced from 17% in the control group to 5% in a LMWH group.¹⁴⁶ It was reduced from 4% in the control group to zero in the LMWH group¹⁴⁶ in another study of 339 patients.¹⁴⁷ Considering both studies the RR was 0.21 (95% CI 0.09 to 0.49)

In patients with lower leg fractures, the five week incidence of venographic DVT was reduced from 18% in the control group to 10% in the LMWH group in one study (n=293)¹⁴⁸ and from 13% to 11% in another (n=150).¹⁴⁹ Considering both studies, the effect of LMWH on DVT was not significant ($p > 0.05$) (RR 0.64; 95% CI 0.39 to 1.05). More studies are needed in well-defined groups of patients.

Recommendations

Currently available data based on small studies of a mixture of different types of injury do not allow routine prophylaxis to be recommended for isolated limb trauma. However, a thorough risk assessment and an approach using **LMWH** standardised by an institution yet individualised for each patient is recommended.

(F) MULTIPLE TRAUMA

THE RISK

The incidence of DVT in patients who have sustained major trauma is in excess of 50%^{77,78,439-442} (Table I) and PE is the third leading cause of death in those who survive beyond the first day.^{77,443-445} The risk is particularly high in patients with spinal cord injury, pelvic fracture and those needing surgery.^{77,78,446-448}

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Patients with polytrauma have a particularly high risk for VTE. The tissue factor released by multiple injuries is potentiated by the likely surgical interventions and the subsequent prolonged immobility⁴⁴⁶ produces marked venous stasis. Routine

venography has shown a DVT frequency of 58% in these patients.⁷⁷

Well-designed studies in this area are few and thromboprophylaxis has to be assessed according to the risk for bleeding. However, in the absence of intracranial bleeding and when bleeding is under control, **LMWH** (enoxaparin 30mg bid) started within 36 hours of injury has been shown to be more effective than **LDUH** (5,000 iu b.d.).⁴³⁹ It reduced the incidence of venographic DVT from 44% in the **LDUH** to 31% in the **LMWH** group (RR 0.70; 95% CI 0.51 to 0.97). The superiority of **LMWH** to **LDUH** has been confirmed by a subsequent study and a meta-analysis.^{441,449} A study comparing nadroparin fixed daily dose versus a weight-adjusted dose did not demonstrate any significant difference (zero vs 3% DVT).⁴⁵⁰

Three randomized controlled trials have tested the efficacy of **IPC**. The first was in patients with pelvic fractures but the study was small and underpowered so that the DVT reduction from 11% in the control group to 6% in the **IPC** group was not significant ($p > 0.05$).³⁴³ **IPC** or **FIT** was compared with enoxaparin 30 mg b.d. in the second with an incidence of DVT of 2% and 1% respectively.⁴⁵¹ In the third, **IPC** was compared with **FIT** with an incidence of DVT of 6% and 21% respectively ($p < 0.02$).⁴⁵²

Mechanical methods are attractive if chemical prophylaxis is contraindicated. However, more studies are needed to confirm the efficacy of **IPC** as this would be the method of choice in patients in whom **LMWH** is contraindicated because of increased or continuing risk of bleeding.

Recommendations

LMWH starting as soon as bleeding risk is acceptable (**Grade A**) or **IPC** in the presence of contraindications to **LMWH** (**Grade B**) and continued until full ambulation.

(G) ELECTIVE SPINE SURGERY

THE RISK

The incidence of DVT detected by routine venography in the absence of prophylaxis has been found to be 18% (Table I).^{154,453} A review of studies on complications in patients having spinal fusion reported a 3.7% incidence for symptomatic DVT and 2.2% for PE.⁴⁵⁴

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Two small randomized controlled studies comparing no prophylaxis with **LDUH**⁴⁵⁵ and with enoxaparin⁷⁶⁸ demonstrated that prophylaxis reduces the incidence of asymptomatic DVT from 20% and 10% respectively to zero. In a prospective non-

randomized study of 306 patients⁷⁶⁹ venographically detected DVT was found in 6% of those having IPC and in 21% of those without prophylaxis.

Recommendations

Mechanical method: IPC (Grade B)

Drug: LMWH (Grade B)

Initiation: before operation for IPC or after operation for LMWH

Duration: during hospitalization (Grade C).

(H) SPINAL CORD INJURY

THE RISK

Spinal Cord injury

In the absence of prophylaxis the incidence of silent DVT is of the order of 35% (Table I). In this group of patients, PE is the third leading cause of death.^{456,457} In a series of 1649 patients undergoing rehabilitation, symptomatic DVT occurred in 10% and PE in 3%.⁴⁵⁸

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

LDUH and a combination of **LDUH** with **GEC** were compared with no prophylaxis in a randomized controlled study.¹⁰⁸ The incidence of venographic DVT was 47% and 50% in the control and **LDUH** groups and 7% in the group that received combined prophylaxis. Subsequently, two small randomized controlled studies^{439,459} compared **LMWH** with **LDUH**. Pooled results in 58 patients showed a trend in reducing asymptomatic DVT by 50% ($p > 0.05$) and changing the risk of proximal DVT from 20% to zero ($p = 0.05$ with Yates' correction). When a combination of **LDUH** with **IPC** was compared with **LMWH** in a randomized controlled study,⁴⁶⁰ results shown by routine venography were equally poor (63% vs 66%). It appears that patients with spinal cord injury are not only at high risk for VTE but also a highly resistant group to single prophylactic measures. Further studies are needed.

Recommendations

Drug: IPC and GEC in combination with LMWH. (Grade B)

Initiation: IPC and GEC on admission and LMWH when bleeding risk is acceptable (Grade C)

Duration: LMWH and IPC for three months and continuation with GEC indefinitely (Grade C)

(I) BURNS

THE RISK

There is a spectrum from mild to severe risk in burned patients. All ages are represented. Some patients have additional injuries to other organs or co-morbid diseases, requiring a multidisciplinary approach and intensive care. The incidence of DVT using routine screening with duplex scanning in the absence of prophylaxis varies between 6% and 27% (Table I)^{160-162,461} Symptomatic VTE occurs in in 2.4% to 7.0% of patients.^{160,462,463}

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Faced with the lack of evidence-based data, prophylaxis has to be individually assessed as it is in multiple injured patients. Therefore, recommendations for burned patients are extrapolated from this group of patients.

Recommendations

Drug: LMWH (Grade C)

Initiation: as soon as it is considered safe to do so

Duration: as long as the patient remains at risk (Grade C)

NEUROSURGERY

THE RISK

The incidence of asymptomatic DVT detected by the fibrinogen uptake test (FUT) in the absence of prophylaxis is approximately 22%, with proximal thrombosis found in 5% (Table I).^{123-127,464-466} The risk is particularly high (21%-32%) in patients with glioma⁴⁶⁷⁻⁴⁷¹ and persists for a year or more.⁴⁶⁷

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

IPC reduced the incidence of silent DVT from 19.1% in the no prophylaxis group to 1.5% in the test group in a randomized controlled study.¹²⁴ **GEC and IPC combined with GEC** reduced the incidence of silent DVT from 20% in the absence of prophylaxis to 9% in a subsequent randomized controlled study.¹²⁶

Two large randomized controlled studies compared the effect of **adding LMWH** to **GEC**.^{472,473} LMWH with GEC was more effective than GEC alone in reducing not only all DVT (RR 0.62; 95% CI 0.46 to 0.84), but also proximal DVT (RR 0.48; 95% CI 0.28 to 0.84). However, meta-analysis of four randomized controlled studies, three of which involved LMWH, demonstrated that while heparin prophylaxis resulted in a 45% relative risk reduction of venous thromboembolic events, there was a 71% relative risk increase of major bleeding.⁴⁷⁴ However, this

relative risk corresponds to a low absolute risk for bleeding. Thus, the number needed to treat was 7.7 for VTE and number needed to harm was 102.

Recommendations

Recommendations for prophylaxis in this group would consist of the use of **IPC in all patients with or without graduated elastic compression stockings (grade A)**. Addition of **LMWH** is associated with an increase of efficacy (**grade A**). However, the use of, and timing of LMWH administration should be individualized because of increased risk of bleeding.

MEDICAL PATIENTS

THE RISK

Acute medical conditions such as stroke, congestive heart failure, respiratory disease, infections or myocardial infarction are associated with a high risk of VTE (Table I).^{475,476} The patients' overall risk is affected by reduced mobility, cancer with or without chemotherapy (see below) or by patient-related risk factors such as prior VTE, advancing age, obesity, and coagulation disorders which can be either inherited or acquired.⁴⁷⁷⁻⁴⁸²

A high prevalence of DVT (28% to 33%) has been detected in medical intensive care patients in several studies.^{122,483,484} In three other large randomized trials, the prevalence of VTE in the control groups (general medical patients) ranged from 4.96% to 14.9%.^{158,485,486} In hospitalized medical patients, asymptomatic proximal DVT has been shown to be associated with a higher mortality rate compared to those with isolated calf DVT.⁴³

Autopsy studies show that only 25 % of patients dying from PE in general hospitals have had recent surgery. The rest were immobilised patients with medical illnesses.²⁰³ Overall mortality in medical patients admitted to general hospitals is about 10 %, and about one in 10 hospital deaths (1 % of all admissions) is due to PE.^{18,203} Fatal PE is the leading cause of sudden death in hospitalized medical patients, and it is estimated that one of 20 hospitalized medical patients may suffer a fatal PE in the absence of appropriate VTE prophylaxis.²³

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Acutely ill medical patients

Three randomized controlled studies demonstrated that **LDUH** was effective in preventing asymptomatic DVT when compared to no prophylaxis (RR 0.16; 95% CI 0.06 to 0.43).^{91,121,155} However, significant differences in mortality in hospitalized medical patients using LDUH have not been shown.^{487,488} Subsequently, three randomized controlled studies demonstrated that **LMWH** was

effective in preventing asymptomatic DVT when compared to no prophylaxis (RR 0.36; 95% CI 0.22 to 0.59).^{51,158,485} In one of these studies,¹⁵⁸ enoxaparin 20 mg daily was ineffective but enoxaparin 40 mg daily was effective. **LMWH** was also effective in reducing clinically important DVT (symptomatic DVT or PE, sudden death and symptomatic proximal DVT) when compared to no prophylaxis (RR 0.56; 95% CI 0.38 to 0.81).⁴⁸⁹ There was no increased bleeding in any of the studies.

Four randomized controlled trials have compared one daily dose of LMWH with 12 or 8 hourly LDUH.⁴⁹⁰⁻⁴⁹³ Although none of the studies showed any advantage for LMWH for asymptomatic DVT on its own, a small advantage was apparent when the results were combined (4.24% vs 5.77%) (RR 0.73; 95% CI 0.56 to 0.97). A meta-analysis of eight studies comparing LMWH with LDUH found a 52% lower incidence of major hemorrhage using LMWH (p=0.049).⁴⁹⁴

In a randomized double-blind trial (ARTEMIS)⁴⁹⁵ in acutely ill medical patients, **fondaparinux** (single daily dose of 2.5mg) reduced the incidence of VTE (venographic asymptomatic DVT and symptomatic VTE) from 10.5% with placebo to 5.6% (p < 0.029) without increase in the bleeding risk; there were no PE in the fondaparinux group compared with five PE in the placebo group all of which were fatal.

Despite striking evidence supporting DVT prophylaxis with LDUH or LMWH, prophylaxis is underutilized in medical patients compared with surgical patients.^{44,475,479,496,497}

All hospitalized medical patients should be assessed for risk of VTE and those at moderate (immobilised patients with active disease) or high risk (stroke, age > 70, cardiac failure, shock, history of previous VTE, malignancy or thrombophilia) should receive prophylaxis.⁴⁷⁵ Electronic alerts should be considered for hospitals with computerized order entry systems.⁴⁴

Acute myocardial infarction

Traditionally, patients with acute myocardial infarction are among the highest-risk medical patients for VTE. However, in the presence of the currently aggressive antithrombotic and thrombolytic therapies for myocardial infarction, specific prophylactic regimens are not routinely required.

Acute stroke

Acute ischemic stroke

LDUH was effective in reducing asymptomatic DVT when compared with no prophylaxis in one study (RR 0.30; 95% CI 0.22 to 0.41).⁵⁴ A **low molecular weight heparinoid** (danaparoid) was also effective (RR 0.14; 95% CI 0.03 to 0.64).⁵⁷ **LMWH** was effective in reducing asymptomatic DVT when compared with no prophylaxis in three randomized studies (RR 0.61; 95% CI 0.49 to 0.77).^{52,55,56}

A systematic review of 10 LMWH trials found a significant reduction in DVT and PE but this was at the expense of increased bleeding complications.⁴⁹⁸ Two

trials have compared danaparoid^{499,500} and one LMWH (enoxaparin)⁵⁰¹ with LDUH. A meta-analysis has calculated reduction of asymptomatic DVT from 22% in the LDUH groups to 13% in the danaparoid or enoxaparin groups (RR 0.59; 95% CI 0.43 to 0.82).⁵⁰²

Acute hemorrhagic stroke

In patients with acute hemorrhagic stroke, the value of LDUH or LMWH in the prevention of VTE has not been tested by randomized controlled trials. A recent study randomized 133 patients with documented intracerebral hemorrhage to GEC alone or GEC combined with IPC. The incidence of ultrasound detected asymptomatic DVT on day 10 was reduced from 15.9% in the GEC group to 4.7% in the GEC combined with IPC group (RR 0.29; 95% CI 0.08 to 1.00).²⁷¹

Recommendations

All acutely ill medical patients should be routinely assessed for risk of VTE and considered for thromboprophylaxis. In particular, patients over the age of 40 with acute medical illness and/or reduced mobility with one of the following morbidities: acute heart failure NYHA class III/IV, respiratory disease (respiratory failure with or without ventilation or exacerbation of respiratory disease), active cancer requiring therapy, acute infective disease including severe infection and sepsis, rheumatic disease, ischemic stroke or acute myocardial infarction should be considered for prophylaxis. Patients with acute medical illness with reduced mobility and one of the following risk factors: history of VTE, malignant disease or age over 75 should also be considered for prophylaxis.

For acutely ill medical patients prophylaxis with **LDUH 5000 IU t.d.s or LMWH (enoxaparin 40 mg once daily or dalteparin 5000 units once daily) are grade A recommendations.**

In patients with suspected or proven hemorrhagic stroke and in those with ischemic stroke in whom the risks of prophylactic anticoagulant therapy are perceived to outweigh the benefits, **GEC combined with IPC** is recommended. This is a **grade B** recommendation based on extrapolation of data from trials in neurosurgical patients,^{123,124,126,261} surgical patients²⁵² and one randomized controlled study in patients with ischemic hemorrhagic stroke.²⁷¹

CRITICAL CARE PATIENTS

THE RISK

The incidence of DVT in patients in the ICU ranges from 25% to 32% (Table I). Most of these patients have several risk factors for VTE^{503,504} and approximately 5% develop DVT prior to admission to the ICU.^{157,505-507}

These patients pose a special challenge for VTE prophylaxis^{483,506,508} because

they often have multisystem disease which renders routine methods of prevention problematic. For example, thrombocytopenia, renal insufficiency, or active bleeding (often gastrointestinal) may preclude the use of pharmacologic prophylaxis. Peripheral arterial disease or limb amputation may render mechanical prophylaxis ineffective or contraindicated. Thus, it is paradoxical that this group of patients may not be able to safely or effectively use some of the standard prophylaxis measures.

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Two randomized controlled studies have demonstrated that LDUH is effective in reducing asymptomatic DVT (RR 0.37; 95% CI 0.28 to 0.50)^{121,509} LMWH was also effective when compared with no prophylaxis (RR 0.55; 95% CI 0.30 to 0.99)¹²² A comparison of LMWH to LDUH in a randomized study of 325 patients demonstrated equal efficacy without any difference in bleeding.⁵¹⁰ Although references to abstracts as evidence for recommendations has been avoided throughout the document, most of the evidence available on prophylaxis in critical care patients as quoted in this paragraph is in abstract form and thus an exception to the rule has been made.

Recommendations

LDUH or LMWH is recommended unless contraindications limit their use (**Grade A**). For patients with contraindications to pharmacological prophylaxis, the use of **GEC stockings with IPC** is an alternative (**Grade C**). In the absence of contraindications, we suggest **combined mechanical plus pharmacologic prophylaxis (Grade C)**. For patients with contraindications to prophylaxis, consider surveillance with duplex scanning.

CANCER PATIENTS

THE RISK

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) is an important and potentially fatal complication in cancer patients. In a nested case controlled study, the odds ratio for development of VTE in patients with cancer was 6.5.⁵¹¹ The risk of thromboembolic disease varies by type of malignancy with VTE rates of 120 per 10,000 patients described for ovarian malignancy, 117 per 10,000 for primary brain malignancy and 110 per 10,000 for pancreatic cancer.⁵¹¹ The risk for development of VTE in cancer patients undergoing operation is about twice that for patients without cancer.⁵¹²⁻⁵¹⁴ Rates of fatal PE range between 1-5%, with rates of asymptomatic deep vein thrombosis (DVT) of about 30-50%.

Ambulant cancer patients receiving chemotherapy or radiotherapy appear to have a therapy-associated increased rate of VTE. The increased risk appears to be

tumour and stage-dependent. In a breast cancer prevention trial where women at high risk for the development of cancer were randomized to placebo or the hormone therapy Tamoxifen, there was an increased risk for DVT from 0.084% per year for those receiving placebo to 0.13% in the Tamoxifen group.⁵¹⁵ Increase in disease burden in breast cancer is associated with an increased risk of therapy-associated thrombosis with rates ranging from 1% in node negative disease to 17% for advanced disseminated malignancy.^{478,516-520} Only limited data are available for patients with other tumour types with primary brain malignancy having reported rates of VTE ranging between 8% and 26%.^{467,468} Rates for other tumour types are summarised in tables XIX and X.

The Stockholm surgical studies evaluated potential benefits of pre-operative radiotherapy for reduction of local recurrence in patients with rectal cancer undergoing operative intervention. Patients who received radiotherapy had a higher frequency of VTE within three months of therapy and surgery compared with those who did not (7.5% vs 3.5%).⁵²⁶

PROPHYLACTIC METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General considerations

Surgical patients

LDUH reduces the risk of DVT and fatal PE in patients with malignancy having surgery.^{46,130,150,205,520}

LMWH is at least as effective as **LDUH**.^{210,220,235}

The intensity of perioperative antithrombotic therapy in cancer patients has been assessed. In gynecologic oncology patients, **LDUH** twice a day was ineffective when compared to no prophylaxis,¹²⁸ but administration three times a day was effective (RR 0.47; 95% CI 0.22 to 0.98).¹³⁰ In a study of 2070 patients, 65% of whom underwent laparotomy for malignant disease, two doses of the LMWH (dalteparin sodium) were assessed. The frequency of VTE was reduced from 14.9% in patients receiving 2500 anti Xa units to 8.5% in patients receiving 5000 units once daily (RR 0.52; 95% CI 0.37 to 0.74) without any significant increase in perioperative bleeding complications.²²⁶

Continuation of LMWH for four weeks after discharge home reduces the risk of asymptomatic DVT as demonstrated by venography from 13.8% to 5.5% (RR 0.36; 95% CI 0.16 to 0.79).⁵²⁷

Medical cancer patients

LMWH is effective for preventing thromboembolic disease associated with acute medical illness (see section on medical patients).

For ambulant cancer patients receiving therapy out of hospital, only one prospective trial has evaluated antithrombotic intervention. This was a study in 311

patients with metastatic breast cancer receiving chemotherapy randomized to **low dose warfarin** (INR between 1.3 and 1.9) or placebo.⁵²⁸ The frequency of symptomatic VTE was reduced from 4.5% to 0.8% (Fisher's exact test p=0.038) (RR 0.14 95% CI 0.02 to 1.18). The value of routine primary thromboprophylaxis for patients receiving chemotherapy with other tumor types is not yet established.

For bed-ridden hospitalized cancer patients, there are no specific studies that have evaluated potential benefits from thromboprophylaxis. Therefore, data derived from contemporary trials assessing the value of LMWH in the prevention of thromboembolic disease in acutely ill medical patients may be extrapolated to the cancer population.

Patients receiving radiotherapy

Although patients who receive radiotherapy have a higher frequency of VTE within three months of therapy and surgery compared with those who do not (7.5% vs 3.5%),⁵²⁶ there are no studies on the value of routine thromboprophylaxis in those receiving radiotherapy. Such studies need to be performed.

Prevention of thromboembolic disease with central venous catheters

Historic data suggest that cancer patients with central venous catheters have a high frequency for development of VTE. The use of **LMWH** (Dalteparin sodium 2500 units once daily) has been shown to be effective in reducing venographic thrombosis from 62% to 6% (RR 0.04; 95% CI 0.01 to 0.42) in one study.⁴⁷⁷ **Warfarin** (1mg per day) has been shown to be effective in reducing all venographic thrombosis from 37% to 9% (RR 0.17; 95% CI 0.05 to 0.59).⁵²⁹ However, more recent clinical trials evaluating either **low dose warfarin or LMWH** were not able to demonstrate benefit for routine thromboprophylaxis in this indication.⁵³⁰⁻⁵³³ This may be due to changes in the way that newer generations of catheters are inserted or maintained.

Recommendations

In surgical patients with cancer, **LDUH** (5000 IU 8-hourly commenced prior to operation) or **LMWH** (initiated and dosed according to manufacturer's recommendations) (Grade A) should be used. **For patients at high risk for development of thromboembolic disease in the post-discharge period** (i.e., those with large volume residual malignant disease, previous history of venous thromboembolic disease), **prolonged thromboprophylaxis with enoxaparin 40 mg once daily for up to 4 weeks after operation** should be considered (Grade B).

In ambulant non-surgical cancer patients, data are available only for those with advanced breast cancer receiving chemotherapy (see above). In these patients, use of vitamin K antagonists to maintain an INR of between 1.3 and 1.9 may be considered (Grade B).

For cancer patients hospitalized with acute medical illness, thromboprophylaxis should be based on the risk for VTE determined by the acute medical co-morbidity. **LMWH** (initiated and dosed according to manufacturer's recommendations) or **LDUH** should be used (5000 IU 8-hourly) (**Grade A**).

For cancer patients with central venous catheters, routine use of thromboprophylaxis to prevent central venous catheter associated thrombosis is not recommended (**Grade B**).

THROMBOPHILIA

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The pathogenesis of VTE is multifactorial involving environmental, acquired and genetic risk factors. Congenital predisposition to venous thrombosis (thrombophilia) should be investigated in patients with a documented unexplained thrombotic episode or positive family history.^{40,534} The frequency of congenital thrombophilia in consecutive patients with confirmed idiopathic thrombosis occurring outside the clinical setting of surgery, trauma, or cancer is approximately 25%. The most common genetic predisposition in patients of European origin is activated protein C (APC) resistance (Factor V Leiden). Others include: antithrombin (AT), protein C (PC) or protein S (PS) deficiencies, hyperhomocysteinemia, prothrombin G20210A gene mutation or combined thrombophilias.⁵³⁵⁻⁵⁴⁶

Abnormalities in the fibrinolytic system may contribute to increase the risk of VTE but their clinical relevance has not been well established.⁵⁴⁷⁻⁵⁴⁹ High plasma levels of factors VIII, IX, and XI are independent risk factors but their congenital character has yet to be established.⁵⁵⁰⁻⁵⁵⁵

Not all congenital thrombophilias are associated with the same thrombotic risk. The highest incidence is found in combined defects and antithrombin deficiency and the lowest in Factor V Leiden.⁵⁵⁶ In the EPCOT (European Prospective Cohort on Thrombophilia) study,⁵⁷⁵ asymptomatic carriers of AT, PC, or PS deficiency of FV Leiden, and 1118 controls were included and followed for 5.7 years on average. The incidence of a first event was 0.8% per year in carriers (1.7% and 1.6% in AT deficiency and combined defects respectively, 0.1% for FV Leiden) and 0.1% in controls.⁵⁵⁶ The adjusted RR reported by family studies is 43 (95% CI 10.2 to 180) for antithrombin, 31 (95% CI 7.0 to 139) for protein C and 36 (95% CI 7.9 to 160) for protein S deficiency.⁵⁵⁷ The risk of thrombosis when homozygous Factor V Leiden or Prothrombin 20210A defects are present is considered to be extremely high, 50-80 fold compared with the normal population. The risk is also very high when heterozygous defects in both mutations are present.⁵⁵⁸

Acquired disorders associated with an increased risk for venous thromboembolism include the antiphospholipid syndrome, myeloproliferative

disorders and acquired APC resistance. It has been suggested that antithrombin and protein C deficiencies may also increase the risk of thrombosis.

A strong association exists between symptomatic VTE and both primary (without systemic lupus erythematosus-SLE) and secondary (with SLE) antiphospholipid syndromes.⁵⁵⁹⁻⁵⁶¹ Among patients with SLE, those with lupus anticoagulant have a much greater VTE risk (OR 5.6; 95% CI 3.8 to 8.3) than those without lupus anticoagulant. Similarly, patients with anticardiolipin antibodies have a greater VTE risk (OR 2.2; 95% CI 1.5 to 3.1) than those without anticardiolipin antibodies. Two more recent studies have also confirmed the risk associated with lupus anticoagulant, anticardiolipin or anti-beta2 GPI antibodies.^{562,563}

Polycythemia vera, essential thrombocythemia and chronic myeloid leukemia have all been identified in descending order of magnitude as conferring an increased risk for VTE, particularly thrombosis of hepatic or portal veins.⁵⁶⁴

Acquired deficiencies of antithrombin and protein C are more common than the respective inherited deficiencies but the association with thrombosis is not demonstrated. They are observed in hypercoagulable states associated with disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) such as sepsis from potentially any micro-organism, severe acute respiratory syndrome, severe tissue injury, head injury, fat embolism, severe pancreatitis, solid tumors, hematological malignancies, placental abruption, amniotic fluid embolism, giant hemangiomas, large vessel aneurysms, snake bites, severe transfusion reactions, transplant rejection, and HIT.⁵⁶⁵

Patients with VTE in conjunction with a transient predisposing risk factor have a low risk of recurrence. In contrast, patients with unprovoked idiopathic VTE are candidates for recurrence and thus for thrombophilic screening. The risk of recurrent VTE is not or slightly increased for FactorV Leiden, prothrombin gene mutation and anticardiolipin antibodies (RR 1.4), but it is substantially increased for AT, PC and PS deficiencies and LAC (RR 2.5), and even higher for FactorVIII:C.^{550,566,567} The risk of recurrent VTE in patients with AT, PC or PS deficiency is higher during the first year, especially when the first episode is “spontaneous”.⁵⁶⁸ It has been suggested that the combined use of residual DVT on duplex scanning, a quantitative ELISA D Dimer, and thrombophilia screening after one month of discontinuation of anticoagulant treatment for a first idiopathic VTE can be carried out to help predict different risk groups of VTE recurrence.⁵⁶⁹⁻⁵⁷¹

Acquired hematological abnormalities such as lupus anticoagulant^{572,573} and anticardiolipin antibodies⁵⁷⁴ are associated with predisposition to VTE and have the most adverse outcomes due to a high rate of recurrence, and if anticoagulation is discontinued there is an increased mortality rate.⁵⁷⁵

The role of thrombophilia in the development of DVT in patients having surgery is controversial, at least for those patients who are given appropriate thromboprophylaxis. While a few authors have reported data suggesting an increased

risk of postoperative DVT in carriers of thrombophilia,⁵⁷⁶ others have failed to find this association.⁵⁷⁷ Of interest, Wahlander and her colleagues have recently reported data suggesting that the carrier status of thrombophilia may expose individuals to an increased risk of late postoperative DVT⁵⁷⁸

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROPHYLAXIS

Among asymptomatic patients with congenital thrombophilia, the value of primary prophylaxis is not yet well determined but in the EPCOT study, long-term prophylaxis did not seem beneficial in asymptomatic relatives of symptomatic probands. Patients should be protected during surgery even when they have minor surgery or minor trauma e.g. ankle sprain or in the presence of any medical condition associated with an increased risk of thrombosis (such as pregnancy). After a first thrombotic event, extra prophylactic care is required in men with a deficiency in natural coagulation inhibitors or multiple defects and in women with antithrombin deficiency.⁵⁷⁹ In patients with acquired thrombophilic abnormalities, the decision regarding prophylaxis should be made on an individual basis (Grade C).

The reader is referred to the International Consensus Statement “Thrombophilia and Venous Thromboembolism” (Guidelines According to Scientific Evidence) recently published where there is a detailed presentation of etiology, laboratory diagnosis, indications for testing, prevention and treatment in surgical, medical and pregnant patients with thrombophilia as well as the prevention and management of recurrent thromboembolism in the presence of thrombophilia⁴⁰.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTION

Several studies have reported on the cost-effectiveness for approaches commonly used to prevent VTE.⁵⁸⁰⁻⁵⁸⁸ In medium and high-risk patients the cost of screening, diagnosis and treatment of VTE is so high that currently used recommended methods for prophylaxis are cost-effective (i.e., they optimise use of available resources). Data are not available for low-risk patients concerning cost-effectiveness for currently used prophylactic methods.

Regarding LMWHs, although their cost is greater than unfractionated heparin, the overall cost to treat DVT or PE is less because there is no need for pharmacological monitoring apart from platelet counts, a shorter period in the hospital is required and the complication rates are decreased.^{512,589}

Patients on long-term anticoagulation who require interruption of therapy for surgery or other invasive interventions may receive “bridging therapy” with LMWH at home which has been shown to be more cost-effective than continuous infusion of UFH in the hospital.^{590,591} Because there has been no thromboprophylaxis study in medical patients comparing LMWH, UFH, and no prophylaxis, a decision-tree

model of 10,000 patients was used to analyze the cost-effectiveness of the three options using data from published studies.⁵⁹² Results showed an expected mortality that was lowest in the LMWH group, next in the UFH group, and highest in the no prophylaxis group. Corresponding expected costs of prevention, diagnosis and management of VTE were lowest in the no prophylaxis group, next in the LMWH group and highest in the UFH group. LMWH was superior to UFH by being both more effective and less costly in the base-case analysis as well as in sensitivity analyses in which equal efficacy and equal risk of bleeding were assumed.

TREATMENT

METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Diagnosis

The clinician should maintain clinical vigilance to consider the possibility of DVT or PE which may occur with leg pain or shortness of breath respectively, but may alternatively have subtle, atypical or even no symptoms.

To diagnose or exclude DVT, the key imaging test is venous ultrasonography.⁵⁹³ For suspected PE, the Wells Scoring System relies upon a weighted point score for 8 clinical variables and may assist in categorizing clinical likelihood into low, moderate, or high probability.⁵⁹⁴ The initial blood test for suspected PE should be a D-dimer ELISA.⁵⁹⁵ This is a “rule out” test. If normal, PE is extremely unlikely. However, the D-dimer lacks specificity and will be elevated in PE as well as in multiple other illnesses such as myocardial infarction, cancer, sepsis, the postoperative state, during pregnancy and following childbirth. The best diagnostic imaging test for PE is the chest CT scan.⁵⁹⁶ Lung scanning has now been relegated to a second-choice imaging test reserved for patients in whom use of contrast agent might be hazardous such as those with renal failure. A 16-slice multidetector-row CT, for example, can image the entire chest with a single breath-hold of less than 10 seconds and can identify the entire range of PE from massive saddle embolism to sub-millimeter subsegmental PE in 6th-order pulmonary arterial branches.

General considerations

The objectives for treatment of acute DVT are to prevent death and disability from PE, pulmonary hypertension and peripheral venous disease. Further aims are to prevent recurrence of VTE and development of the post-thrombotic syndrome due to persistent venous obstruction and/or dysfunction of the venous valves.⁵⁹⁷ Acute extension of DVT and progressive swelling of the leg can result in increased compartmental pressure, possibly leading to phlegmasia cerulea dolens, venous gangrene, and limb loss.

Anticoagulants

In patients with DVT, initial therapy with vitamin K antagonists alone is associated with an unacceptable high rate of recurrent VTE. **Initial parenteral heparin and subsequent long-term oral anticoagulation are both necessary** ^{597,598} **(Grade A).**

Treatment with intravenous unfractionated heparin, which generally requires hospitalization, is now rarely used. When using UFH for the initial treatment of DVT, rapidly achieving and maintaining an activated partial thromboplastin time (APTT) within the therapeutic range of 1.5 to 2.5 times the control within 24 hours is likely to reduce the rate of recurrent venous thrombosis⁵⁹⁹⁻⁶⁰¹ **(Grade A recommendation).**

Findings from randomized clinical trials indicate that **LMWH** given subcutaneously should replace UFH in treating DVT.⁶⁰²⁻⁶¹² **LMWH** is effective in patients with PE.^{514,613,614} Thus, anticoagulation should usually be started with **LMWH (Grade A recommendation)**.

LMWHs have a consistent dose response with predictable bioavailability when given subcutaneously. They do not require hematologic monitoring apart from the platelet count. The need for anti Xa monitoring has been reduced by specific labelling of individual regimens in the context of renal insufficiency or obesity (see pharmacopoeia). They may be administered once a day.^{605,615-618} These properties have made LMWH the preferred treatment for patients with uncomplicated DVT as outpatients.^{512,597,619-626}

Fondaparinux is a new option for treatment of DVT and PE based on two recent trials.^{627,628} Fondaparinux is administered once daily. It has not been reported to cause HIT to date.

A randomized double blind trial (THRIVE III) assessed the efficacy of Ximelagatran, administered without coagulation monitoring vs placebo for 18 months after warfarin for secondary prevention was discontinued at 6 months.⁶²⁹ The resulting cumulative risks of VTE (3.2% vs 12.7% p<0.0001) and PE (0.8% vs 5.2% p<0.0001) were significantly lower in the Ximelagatran than in the placebo group. Death from any cause over 18 months occurred in 10 and 12 patients respectively (p=0.7).

The melagatran/ximelagatran regimen had been approved by 18 countries across Europe, South America and Asia for short-term prophylaxis in major hip and knee surgery. Because of concerns about an increase in myocardial infarctions, elevation of liver enzymes and a case of fatal liver failure in the long-term studies, the FDA had not given approval. Because of a second case of severe liver damage a week after short-term therapy melagatran/ximelagatran has been withdrawn from the market and its development terminated (<http://www.astrazeneca.com/pressrelease/5217.aspx>).

Vitamin K antagonist treatment should be adjusted to maintain the INR between 2.0 to 3.0 (target INR 2.5) (**Grade A recommendation**). The risk of bleeding in relation to different INR ranges as reported by several studies is shown in table XXI.

An INR greater than 4.0 is associated with an increased frequency of hemorrhagic complications⁶³³⁻⁶³⁵ Vitamin K antagonists may be started on the first day of heparin therapy, except when patients require thrombolysis, surgery, or have co-morbidities that predispose to major bleeding.^{636,637}

Heparin should be administered for at least five days^{636,637} and should be discontinued when the patient's INR is stable within the therapeutic range of 2.0 to 3.0.

Vitamin K antagonists generally should be continued for 3-6 months in patients

with a first episode of VTE and no continuing risk factor.⁶³⁸⁻⁶⁴⁰ Those with continuing risk factors may require more prolonged treatment.^{597,638} Patients presenting with recurrent DVT should be treated with a more prolonged anticoagulation regimen compared with those having a first episode.⁵⁷⁵ The optimal duration of oral anticoagulant therapy depends on the risk of VTE recurrence.^{597,641}

Adjusted doses of LMWH may be used as treatment in special conditions such as pregnancy⁶⁴² where vitamin K antagonist therapy is contraindicated and in patients with active cancer who are often resistant to vitamin K antagonists.⁶⁴³

Recommendations

When calf DVT is diagnosed, it is recommended that patients be treated with **LMWH followed by warfarin for 3 months.**^{638,644} Idiopathic calf DVT should be treated for a longer period ^{597,645} (**Grade A recommendations**).

Immediate mobilisation with elastic compression stockings to be worn for at least two years at an ankle pressure of 30-40 mmHg (class II) leads to a more rapid reduction of pain and swelling and reduces the occurrence of the post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS).⁶⁴⁶⁻⁶⁵⁰

Fondaparinux, a pentasaccharide (Xa inhibitor) is as effective and safe as LMWH or unfractionated IV heparin for the initial treatment of DVT (**Grade A recommendations**).^{627,628}

LMWH and renal insufficiency

An increased risk of bleeding has not been reported in patients with renal insufficiency receiving prophylactic dosages of LMWH. However, it is advised that for prophylaxis in patients with severe renal insufficiency, prophylactic doses of LMWH should be adjusted down and the patients monitored for bleeding.

In patients with renal insufficiency LMWH in therapeutic doses poses a high risk of major bleeding due to its prolonged half-life. The actual risk of major bleeding has not been assessed in prospective studies. Such studies would have to be done with each LMWH because of different pharmacological properties. Major bleeding in patients with a creatinine greater than 2 mg/dl and a similar number of patients receiving enoxaparin at equal or greater doses for the same indications has been assessed in one retrospective study. Major bleeding occurred in 1 (2%) of 50 patients with normal renal function and 16 (30%) of 53 patients with serum creatinine greater than 2 mg/dl ($p < 0.001$).⁶⁵¹ Accordingly, the manufacturer's label recommends a fifty per cent dose reduction in patients with severe renal impairment.

Although protamine sulphate is efficacious in stopping LMWH induced bleeding in some animal models there are only limited data for humans.

It has been suggested that in patients with severe renal insufficiency the choice of anticoagulant for full anticoagulation therapy should be unfractionated heparin in

most circumstances based upon risk vs benefit when compared with LMWH and the well known efficacy of protamine sulphate in heparinized patients.⁶⁵²

THROMBOLYTIC THERAPY

Thrombolysis for PE

Thrombolytic therapy was initially approved for PE in 1977 but the small number and size of clinical trials, lack of effect on overall mortality, and risk of bleeding complications have impeded its adoption. Thrombolysis in patients with massive PE has been shown to decrease mortality in one trial which enrolled only eight patients.⁶⁵³ Thrombolytic therapy as an adjunct to anticoagulation appears to reduce the rate of recurrent PE and DVT.^{654,655} However, this benefit must be weighed against the risk of increased major hemorrhage. Contraindications such as intracranial disease, recent surgery or trauma preclude its use in some patients who should receive heparin. There is approximately a 1.9% risk of intracranial hemorrhage,⁶⁵⁶ but careful evaluation of risk factors such as increasing age should minimise the risk.⁶⁵⁷

Rapid and accurate risk stratification includes clinical evaluation,⁴⁷⁹ cardiac biomarkers (troponin level)⁶⁵⁸ and right ventricular dilatation or hypokinesia on echocardiography⁶⁵⁹⁻⁶⁶¹ or chest CT.⁵⁹⁶

Thrombolysis acts as a “medical embolectomy”. Studies show that rapid reduction of the hemodynamic insult by dissolving PE reverses right heart dysfunction. In the long term, thrombolysis improves cardiopulmonary reserve, achieves more complete resolution of pulmonary emboli, prevents or attenuates pulmonary hypertension, and improves functional and symptomatic clinical status.^{655,662}

The largest trial of thrombolysis versus anticoagulation alone in PE patients with initially normal blood pressure and right ventricular dysfunction is the MAPPET-3 trial.⁶⁶³ Overall 256 patients were randomized to heparin plus thrombolysis with tissue plasminogen activator 100 mg/2h versus heparin alone. The combined primary endpoint was in-hospital death or clinical deterioration requiring an escalation of treatment. Treatment escalation was required more than twice as frequently in the heparin-plus-placebo group compared with thrombolysis (24.6% vs. 10.2%, p=0.004) (RR 0.34; 95% CI 0.17 to 0.70). Mortality was low in both groups (3.4% in the heparin-plus-thrombolysis group versus 2.2% in the heparin-plus-placebo group, p=0.71). No fatal bleeding or cerebral bleeding occurred in patients receiving heparin plus thrombolysis. Tissue plasminogen activator given in conjunction with heparin improved the clinical course of stable patients with acute submassive PE.

Recommendation

Thrombolysis is indicated in unstable patients with massive PE who have no

absolute contraindications (**Grade B**). Thrombolysis should be considered in hemodynamically stable patients with moderate or severe right ventricular dysfunction because of their increased likelihood of death⁶⁶⁴ (**Grade B**). If thrombolysis is contraindicated, then **mechanical catheter based techniques**⁶⁶⁵ or **open surgical embolectomy**^{666,667} should be considered (Grade C).

Thrombolysis of DVT

Systemic thrombolysis for DVT may reduce the rates of recurrent DVT and the post-thrombotic syndrome. Early randomized trials of systemically administered streptokinase demonstrated that long-term venous valvular function is better preserved than with heparin alone.^{668,669} In an overview of data from six trials, systemic thrombolysis was 3.7 times more effective in producing some degree of lysis than was heparin.⁶⁷⁰ In a pooled analysis of 13 randomized studies, only 4% of patients treated with heparin had substantial or complete lysis compared with 45% of patients receiving systemic streptokinase.⁶⁷¹ However, prolonged streptokinase infusions are often unsatisfactory because of frequent allergic reactions and a hemorrhagic rate three-fold higher than that for patients managed with heparin anticoagulation alone.⁶⁷⁰ In addition, the frequency of satisfactory lysis is not high enough to generate enthusiasm for systemic thrombolysis.

Catheter-directed thrombolysis for DVT

A catheter-directed technique using urokinase (no longer available) for proximal DVT achieved complete lysis in 72% of patients with concomitant abatement of symptoms.⁶⁷² Delivery of the thrombolytic agent within a clot achieves a high concentration of the agent that has not been possible with systemic administration. Because of simultaneous exposure of large segments of thrombus to a high concentration of the thrombolytic agent, thrombolysis can be enhanced, the duration of treatment shortened, the total amount of thrombolytic agent administered lessened and the complications associated with the longer systemic thrombolysis reduced. Once thrombi are lysed, underlying lesions such as stenosis can be managed by angioplasty, and stenting should be performed if recoil occurs.^{672,673} Successful catheter-directed thrombolysis for iliofemoral DVT is associated with improved quality of life,⁶⁷⁴ improved vein patency and improved venous valve function.⁶⁷⁵

Recommendations

Catheter-directed thrombolysis should be considered for proximal DVT, especially iliofemoral thrombosis in active patients at low risk of bleeding where the risk of the post-thrombotic syndrome is higher than for a more distal DVT, (**Grade B recommendation**). Systemic thrombolysis should be avoided because it is less effective, and because the longer duration of therapeutic infusion required increases

the risk of hemorrhagic complications. For patients with PE, peripherally administered intravenous thrombolysis is approved and should be used in patients with massive PE⁶⁷⁶ and hypotension. A short, high-concentration thrombolytic regimen (tPA 100mg/2h approved by FDA) is recommended in PE patients with or without hemodynamic impairment if echocardiography demonstrates right ventricular dysfunction⁶⁷⁷ (**Grade B recommendation**).

SURGICAL THROMBECTOMY

General considerations

Restoring patency to a thrombosed vein and preserving valve function is important for reducing the risk and severity of the post-thrombotic syndrome. Long-term studies demonstrate improved patency of the iliac vein following thrombectomy with anticoagulation alone.⁶⁷⁸⁻⁶⁸² A randomized trial of iliofemoral venous thrombectomy with a temporary arteriovenous fistula versus anticoagulation has demonstrated improved venous patency and improved clinical and hemodynamic outcome with preserved valve function in patients randomized to thrombectomy plus a temporary arteriovenous fistula compared with anticoagulation.⁶⁸⁰⁻⁶⁸² Further studies comparing thrombectomy with conventional treatment are needed to determine recurrence and late outcome rates.

Recommendation

Surgical venous thrombectomy should be considered for patients with symptomatic iliofemoral DVT who are not candidates for catheter-directed thrombolysis (Grade C).

CATHETER-BASED MECHANICAL PROCEDURES

Percutaneous mechanical thrombectomy is now being used to dissolve, fragment and aspirate the thrombi and emboli in patients with acute massive DVT and PE.⁶⁸³ These procedures are best suited for fresh thrombi less than 10-14 days old. Their efficacy in older thromboemboli is less predictable. Data concerning the short and long-term effects of catheter-based mechanical intervention on the vessel wall, venous valve, and pulmonary vasculature are lacking and are required before its role can be clearly defined.⁶⁸⁴ This technique needs further short-term and long-term evaluation and eventually randomized controlled trials before any recommendations can be made.

INFERIOR VENA CAVA FILTERS

A filter device should be inserted in the inferior vena cava of patients with proximal DVT when anticoagulation is contraindicated or when adequate anticoagulation fails to prevent PE.^{685,686} Additional high-risk patient groups such as those with multiple trauma and pelvic fracture have been treated successfully with reduction in PE. In a study of 400 patients with symptomatic DVT, all of whom were receiving

heparin or LMWH and were randomized to inferior vena cava filter or not, the incidence of PE was reduced at 12 days but not at 1 year.⁶⁸⁷ However, in an eight-year follow-up of these patients, those treated with filters had continued protection against PE with no increase in post-thrombotic syndrome.⁶⁸⁷ Complications include insertion site thrombosis, filter migration and caval thrombosis. Retrievable filters are now available and are under investigation.⁶⁸⁸⁻⁶⁹² However, indications for removal have not been established.

Recommendation

IVC filters are indicated in patients with PE or proximal DVT who have contraindications to anticoagulation or who have suffered recurrent PE while receiving adequate therapeutic anticoagulation (**Grade B**). Consider filter placement in patients with major trauma or pelvic fracture (**Grade C**). Indications for insertion and removal of retrievable IVC filters have not yet been established.

RECURRENT IDIOPATHIC VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM

General considerations

VTE used to be considered a time-limited illness that could be effectively treated with 6 months of anticoagulation. However, longitudinal studies indicate a surprisingly high rate of recurrence. At 10 years follow-up, the recurrence rate is approximately 30% in separate Italian⁶⁹³ and American,⁶⁹⁴ registries. Risk of recurrence may be higher in the presence of residual venous thrombosis or elevation of D-dimer.^{569,571,695} These disturbing findings have led to trials aiming to determine whether anticoagulation should be extended beyond 3-6 months or perhaps even administered indefinitely.

Studies of prolonged (> 3-6 months) anticoagulation have focused on patients at highest risk of recurrence, those with idiopathic DVT and PE. Regardless of the precise definition of idiopathic, almost every contemporary trial has found that prolonged anticoagulation reduces long-term recurrence by about two thirds.^{630,639,644,696-698}

A minor controversy has emerged over the optimal intensity of anticoagulation. One approach tested standard intensity warfarin (after completion of the first three months of treatment) with a target INR between 2.0 and 3.0 versus placebo for a further 24 months. The trial enrolled 162 patients with idiopathic VTE, and three of 79 (3.8%) assigned to warfarin had major bleeding compared with none in the placebo group ($p = 0.09$).⁶³⁰ To minimize bleeding complications, a novel approach tested low intensity warfarin with a target INR between 1.5 and 2.0. This latter approach only required INR testing once every 2 months⁶⁹⁹ (Table XXI).

In an open-label randomized trial of time-limited versus prolonged anticoagulation in 227 patients after a second episode of VTE, 116 patients were randomized to vitamin K antagonists (target INR between 2.0 and 2.85) for an

indefinite period.⁵⁷⁵ Among the 116 patients receiving standard intensity and indefinite duration anticoagulation, 10 (8.6%) suffered major hemorrhage. Two of the 10 patients died from bleeding; one had a fatal subarachnoid hemorrhage, and the other had fatal hemorrhagic pancreatitis.

Minor controversy ensued after publication of a trial showing that standard intensity warfarin was more effective and equally safe as low intensity warfarin in preventing recurrent VTE. The Extended Low-Intensity Anticoagulation for Thrombo-Embolism (ELATE) Trial⁶³¹ demonstrated a remarkably low major bleeding rate of 1.1 events per 100 patient years with standard anticoagulation (target INR between 2.0 and 3.0). Among patients receiving low intensity anticoagulation in the ELATE study (target INR between 1.5 and 1.9), the major bleeding rate was exactly the same as in the PREVENT Trial^{632,699} 0.9 events per 100 person-years.

Recommendation

Consider **indefinite duration of treatment with vitamin K antagonists** in patients with idiopathic VTE (**Grade B**). The optimal intensity of anticoagulation requires further studies.

TREATMENT IN CANCER PATIENTS

General considerations

Cancer patients who develop an episode of thrombosis are at higher risk for subsequent recurrent thrombosis reported to be with a frequency of 27.1 per 100 patient years for those with cancer compared with 9.0 per 100 patient years for those without cancer.⁷⁰⁰ In the same study, the bleeding risk for cancer patients receiving oral anticoagulant therapy was 13.3 per 100 patient years and 2.1 per 100 patient years for non-cancer patients. A further study by Prandoni and colleagues following a cohort of 842 patients, 181 of whom had cancer associated thrombosis, demonstrated a 12 month cumulative incidence of recurrent thromboembolic disease of 20.7% for cancer patients compared with 6.8% for those without. Bleeding was also more frequent in cancer patients (12.4%) than in non-cancer patients (4.9%) (Hazard Ratio: 2.2).⁷⁰¹

Initial treatment of VTE in cancer

There are no specific studies addressing the initial treatment of VTE in cancer patients. However, many trials that compared **UFH** with **LMWH** for initial treatment of DVT included patients with malignant disease. The meta-analyses of these indicate that unfractionated heparin administered intravenously with routine monitoring of the activated partial thromboplastin time or LMWH administered subcutaneously according to body weight without need for monitoring of the dose are equally effective and safe for initial treatment of DVT. Recommendations

generated for non-cancer patients are extrapolated for use in cancer patients with thrombosis.⁷⁰²⁻⁷⁰⁵

LMWH therapy for initial treatment of DVT offers an opportunity for outpatient management of patients with cancer-associated thromboembolic disease.^{512,514,619,706} Initial management of PE in cancer patients has not been specifically addressed. However, trials have evaluated both intravenous unfractionated heparin and subcutaneous LMWH for treatment of PE.^{514,613} A single study of 108 patients with PE has evaluated the potential for outpatient use of the LMWH, dalteparin sodium. There were 22% of patients in this study who had cancer⁷⁰⁷ and recurrent thrombosis occurred in 5.6% of patients with a major bleeding rate of 2.9%. Thus, cancer patients with PE may receive either unfractionated or LMWH for initial PE treatment unless they are hemodynamically unstable. Outpatient therapy with LMWH is preferred in cancer patients with a potentially shortened duration of life where quality of life is an essential issue.

The safety and efficacy of **inferior vena cava filters** for management of cancer-associated thrombosis have not been evaluated. In general, unless anticoagulant therapy is contra-indicated due to active bleeding, vena cava filters are not recommended in cancer patients. Early benefits are outweighed by longer-term risks for recurrent thrombosis in patients with malignant disease.⁷⁰⁸

Long-term anticoagulation for secondary prevention of VTE

Cancer patients are both at higher risk for development of recurrent thrombosis and for anticoagulant-associated bleeding with the use of vitamin K antagonists. A study that included 676 patients with cancer-associated VTE was sufficiently powered to define long-term treatment outcomes.⁶⁴³ All patients received 5-7 days of the LMWH dalteparin sodium in a dose of 200 U/Kg and thereafter they continued with either LMWH in the full treatment dose for the remainder of the month followed by 75-80% of the full treatment dose for the remaining five months or Vitamin-K antagonists with a target INR of 2-3 for six months. The trial demonstrated 52% reduction in the frequency of recurrent thromboembolic events in favour of patients receiving six months of the LMWH dalteparin sodium without any significant increase in the risk of bleeding complications. There were 27 of 336 patients randomized to receive dalteparin who developed recurrence over six months compared to 53 of 336 randomized to receive Vitamin-K antagonist (8.8% vs 17.4%) (RR 0.51; 95% CI 0.33 to 0.79).

A number of prospective randomized clinical trials suggested that cancer patients receiving LMWH over a prolonged period had an improved cancer-associated survival.^{525,606,607,643,709-711} These data are of considerable interest since LMWH therapy when compared to placebo was not associated with adverse safety (no increase in bleeding), and thus may represent a potential novel adjuvant anticancer therapy. These preliminary data need to be confirmed by further

prospective clinical trials with appropriate design and power to assess cancer outcome before recommendations can be made.

Recommendations

For initial treatment of VTE in cancer patients, we recommend the use of **intravenous unfractionated heparin or subcutaneous LMWH** administered on a body weight adjusted basis according to manufacturers' recommendations (**Grade A**). LMWH administration is preferred as it allows for outpatient management.

For secondary prevention of recurrent VTE, we recommend use of **LMWH** (dalteparin sodium in a dose of 200 units per Kg once daily for one month and then a reduced dose of 75% of the full treatment dose for a further 5 months) (**Grade B**). Thereafter, those with continuing active cancer or receiving active anti-cancer therapy may be considered for continued anticoagulation with LMWH (**Grade C**).

HEPARIN-INDUCED THROMBOCYTOPENIA

Heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT) is an important adverse effect of heparin. HIT is reported to occur in 1% of medical, 3% of surgical, and 5% of cardiac surgical therapy or orthopedic surgery patients, and has also been diagnosed in other patient populations.^{239,712-720} Progression to overt thrombosis leading to amputation or death is the most serious complication occurring in approximately one-third of patients with HIT.^{239,713,718,721} Thrombosis can occur anywhere throughout the venous and arterial circulation. Spontaneous bleeding and petechiae have been reported only rarely.

HIT occurs from exposure to unfractionated heparin (UFH) at prophylactic or treatment doses or from exogenous sources (e.g., catheter flush)^{239,712-722} Low molecular weight heparin (LMWH) also causes HIT but at a 2 to 3-fold lower frequency than UFH.⁷²³ The frequency of HIT appears to be decreasing due to the lesser use of UFH, and the increased use of LMWH and non-heparin anticoagulants. Preventive measures include the use of LMWH or fondaparinux rather than UFH for post-surgical prophylaxis, use of porcine rather than bovine UFH, and avoiding unnecessary and prolonged exposure to UFH.^{239,419,715} In patients being treated or having been recently treated with heparin, HIT should be suspected on the basis of a 30% decrease in platelet count from baseline in the absence of other reasons for thrombocytopenia. The diagnosis can be made if the platelet count decrease is 50% of baseline, assuming no other reasons for thrombocytopenia. HIT patients can present without thrombocytopenia, i.e., the platelet count does not fall to $<100 \times 10^9/L$ (e.g., $350 \times 10^9/L$ to $175 \times 10^9/L$)⁷²⁴ An abrupt decrease in platelet count in the absence of other etiologies and unexplained thrombosis are also characteristics of HIT.^{239,713,715} Symptoms typically appear 4 to 14 days after exposure to UFH,⁷²⁵ or 8 to 14 days after exposure to LMWH.⁷²³ Patients who

received heparin within the prior 100 days can have an immediate, rapid-onset HIT when restarting UFH or LMWH.⁷²⁵ Delayed-onset HIT has been observed with symptoms appearing several days after discontinuation of UFH.⁷²⁶

HIT is an immune response in which antibodies are mainly targeted to the complex of heparin and platelet factor 4 (PF4).⁷²⁷⁻⁷²⁹ Immune complexes of PF4-heparin and HIT antibodies that are immunoglobulin G (IgG) bind to platelets via Fc γ II/ α receptors (CD 32),⁷³⁰ inducing platelet activation, aggregation, and generation of platelet microparticles.⁷²⁷⁻⁷³¹ IgA and IgM have also been identified in HIT patients.⁷³² HIT antibodies provoke leukocyte and endothelial cell activation that augment both the hypercoagulable and inflammatory states.⁷³³⁻⁷³⁷ This combined cellular activation leads to a burst of thrombin generation. Of all patients at risk of thrombosis, those with HIT are at highest risk (>40%).⁷¹³

Two types of laboratory assays for HIT are available: platelet function tests (serotonin release and platelet aggregation assays) and ELISA tests that detect antibodies to the PF4-heparin complex.^{738,739} Each test provides unique and complementary information.^{727,740-742} Functional tests are more specific than the ELISA tests as positive ELISA test results are not always associated with clinical HIT.^{723,741-744} Appropriate use and knowledgeable interpretation of the test results are important.

Clinical trials have shown the direct thrombin inhibitors (DTIs) argatroban^{745,746} (Grade C) and lepirudin^{727,728} (Grade C) to be safe and effective for reducing the risk of thrombosis and associated morbidity / mortality in patients with HIT. These drugs do not cross-react with HIT antibodies. Development of antibodies to lepirudin have been observed in approximately 50% of patients after 10 days treatment, including severe anaphylactic reactions with fatal outcomes in cases of re-exposure to lepirudin.^{747,748} The heparinoid, danaparoid, has been used to treat HIT patients with success (Grade B)^{749,750} but there are reports that danaparoid cross-reacts with some HIT antibodies leading to treatment failures.⁷⁵¹⁻⁷⁵⁴ LMWH can cross-react with most HIT antibodies.^{755,756}

Recommendations

Early diagnosis and treatment are important to improve clinical outcomes.⁷¹⁸ Diagnosis of HIT is based on a comprehensive interpretation of clinical and laboratory information.⁷⁵⁷

For the first 14 days of treatment, platelet counts should be performed every 2 days in patients treated with LMWH, daily if treated with UFH, and daily if the patient's risk of developing HIT is high (Grade C). For medical and obstetric patients treated with LMWH exclusively and no prior exposure to UFH it is no longer considered necessary to monitor the platelet count.⁷¹⁵ Patients with comorbidities are at higher risk of poorer clinical outcomes. All clinical settings including e.g. the emergency department need to be aware of a patient's history of HIT and prior UFH/LMWH exposure.

Laboratory testing should be performed when there is a strong suspicion of HIT (see criteria listed above). Laboratory tests are used to confirm a diagnosis of HIT, but negative results do not exclude this diagnosis.^{740-742,758} **It is useful to perform a combination of tests and to repeat testing over a period of several days (Grade B)**^{741,742} Initial therapeutic decisions should not be dependent upon a positive laboratory test, but should be based upon clinical findings (i.e., thrombocytopenia and/or new thromboembolic events).

UFH and LMWH should be stopped when the diagnosis of HIT is suspected or confirmed (Grade A).⁷¹⁵ It is not sufficient to merely remove the heparin.⁷²¹ Due to the strong hypercoagulable state and high risk of thrombosis associated with HIT, it is recommended that all HIT patients be treated with a non-heparin anticoagulant such as **argatroban, lepirudin, or danaparoid (Grade C).**⁷¹⁵ Differences between these drugs need to be considered when making a clinical treatment decision (e.g., patient renal or liver clearance, drug pharmacokinetics, patient risk of bleeding, prior exposure of patient to lepirudin, physician's experience with the drug, drug availability, cross-reactivity of drug to HIT antibodies, etc.).^{759,760} **With danaparoid treatment, if daily platelet counts do not show signs of recovery within 3 days, it is mandatory to check for immune cross-reactivity of patient antibodies to danaparoid using a functional platelet assay and discontinue treatment if positive. LMWH is contraindicated in patients with HIT (Grade A).**⁷¹⁵

For long-term anticoagulation, vitamin K antagonists can be used. To avoid warfarin-induced limb gangrene/skin necrosis in patients with HIT, these should only be administered after rise of platelet counts with substantial recovery to >100,000/ μ L or to pre-HIT values (Grade C). Starting doses need to be low (5 mg warfarin, 6 mg phenprocoumon), and given with overlapping administration of argatroban, lepirudin, or danaparoid for at least 5 days.^{715,761,762} For special populations of patients with HIT requiring anticoagulation, such as pregnant, pediatric and patients undergoing coronary or other vascular procedures, cardiac surgery, or hemodialysis, specific drug and dose issues need to be considered.

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

The statements and recommendations made in this document are based on a review of the literature using clearly defined levels of evidence. This process has revealed a number of key questions that require to be addressed by future studies. They are summarised in this final section.

Patient populations

The risk of DVT in the various minimally invasive abdominal surgical procedures and advanced laparoscopic surgery needs to be established.

Recurrence rates of DVT in relation to the residual thrombus, increased D-dimer or risk factors following treatment of the first episode needs to be determined.

A database needs to be created to establish the risk of pulmonary hypertension in patients with PE

Studies on the value of “computerised alerts” are needed to improve efficiency in identifying those in need of prophylaxis.

The value of spiral CT evidence of right heart failure as predictor of a high-risk group of patients with PE requiring thrombolysis needs to be determined.

Prophylaxis

Further studies to assess additive effects on the efficacy, cost-effectiveness and safety of LMWH and mechanical methods in high and medium-risk patients for various medical and surgical specialities are needed.

Possible differences in efficacy of mechanical devices of different design need to be determined such as thigh length vs knee length stockings and pneumatic sleeves, and sequential gradient versus uniform pressure sleeves.

The duration of prophylaxis and value of extended out-of-hospital thromboprophylaxis in medical patients need to be determined.

A multicentre trial assessing efficacy, cost-effectiveness and safety of thromboprophylaxis in high-risk pregnant patients is required.

The optimum prophylactic therapy in patients having laparoscopic surgery needs to be determined.

There is a need for further studies to assess the efficacy of mechanical methods in medical patients.

Phase four studies (post-marketing surveillance) to address the long term potential harm of prophylactic methods should be encouraged.

The value of routine thromboprophylaxis in those receiving radiotherapy needs to be evaluated.

There is a need for a randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled trial on safety and efficacy of heparin bridging therapy in at-risk patients on chronic VKA needing temporary interruption for an elective procedure or surgery.

Treatment regimens

The efficacy and safety of thrombolytic therapy in patients with PE and right ventricular dysfunction requires confirmation by Grade A randomized trials.

A randomized study comparing catheter directed thrombolysis of proximal DVT with conventional anticoagulation therapy in preventing the post-thrombotic syndrome is required.

The best approach for LMWH use (e.g. dose adjustment or anti Xa monitoring) in pregnancy, obesity and renally impaired patients needs to be determined (Note: there are increasingly clear guidelines for dose adjustment without anti Xa monitoring).

How do we manage bleeding in patients treated with low molecular weight heparins and fondaparinux? Studies should explore the efficacy of protamine sulphate in patients bleeding from LMWH.

The role of long-term low molecular weight heparin versus vitamin K antagonists in the treatment of DVT and prevention of post-thrombotic syndrome should be determined by randomized trials.

The role of long-term use of elastic stockings in preventing recurrent DVT and post-thrombotic syndrome should be determined.

The value of prognostic markers such as D-dimer, C reactive protein and extent of residual clot burden in guiding the duration of long-term oral anticoagulant therapy needs to be determined.

The use of new drugs as an alternative to UFH or LMWH in patients with HIT needs clinical evaluation.

More randomized control trials are needed to determine the complications / harm produced by prophylactic methods.

The improved survival in patients with cancer treated with LMWH needs to be confirmed by further prospective clinical trials with appropriate design and power to assess cancer outcome before recommendations can be made.

Table I

The frequency of DVT in trauma, surgery and medical patients in the absence of prophylaxis (diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods: Phlebography, FUT or DUS). The listed frequency is true for the total groups of patients. The presence of additional risk factors indicated in the text is likely to increase the risk of thromboembolism for individual patients.

Patient groups	Number of studies	Patients n	DVT incidence (weighted mean)	95% CI
Stroke				
Czechanowski & Heinrich 1981 ⁵⁰		41	23	
Dahan et al, 1986 ⁵¹		27	3	
Elias et al, 1990 ⁵²		15	12	
McCarthy et al, 1977 ⁵³		16	12	
McCarthy & Turner 1986 ⁵⁴		161	117	
Prins et al, 1989 ⁵⁵		30	15	
Sandset et al, 1990 ⁵⁶		50	17	
Turpie et al, 1987 ⁵⁷		25	7	
Warlow et al, 1972 ⁵⁸		30	18	
Total	8	395	224 (56%)	51% to 61%
Elective Hip Replacement				
Belch et al, 1982 ⁵⁹		36	20	
Bergqvist et al, 1979 ⁶⁰		71	45	
Dechavanne et al, 1974 ⁶¹		27	13	
Dechavanne et al, 1975 ⁶²		20	8	
Evarts et al, 1971 ⁶³		56	30	
Gallus et al, 1983 ⁶⁴		47	25	
Hampson et al, 1974 ⁶⁵		52	28	
Harris et al, 1977 ⁶⁶		51	23	
Hoek et al, 1992 ⁶⁷		99	56	
Hull et al, 1990 ⁶⁸		158	77	
Ishak & Morley, 1981 ⁶⁹		41	22	
Kalodiki et al, 1996 ⁷⁰		14	13	
Mannucci et al, 1976 ⁷¹		51	22	
Morris et al, 1974 ⁷²		32	16	
Turpie et al, 1986 ⁷³		50	21	
VTCSG, 1975 ⁷⁴		30	11	
Welin-Berger et al, 1982 ⁷⁵		16	5	
Total	17	851	435 (51%)	48% to 54%
Multiple Trauma				
Freeark et al, 1967 ⁷⁶		124	4	
Geerts et al, 1994 ⁷⁷		349	201	
Kudsk et al, 1989 ⁷⁸		38	24	
Shackford et al, 1990 ⁷⁹		25	1	
Total	4	536	270 (50%)	46% to 55%
Total Knee Replacement				
Hull et al, 1979 ⁸⁰		29	19	
Kim, 1990 ⁸¹		244	80	
Leclerc et al, 1996 ⁸²		57	31	
Lynch et al, 1988 ⁸³		75	28	
Stringer et al, 1989 ⁸⁴		55	31	
Stulberg et al, 1984 ⁸⁵		49	41	
Wilson et al, 1992 ⁸⁶		32	22	
Total	7	541	252 (47%)	42% to 51%

Table 1, contd.

Hip Fracture				
Ahlberg et al, 1968 ⁸⁷		45	16	
Checketts & Bradley, 1974 ⁸⁸		26	13	
Darke, 1972 ⁸⁹		66	11	
Galasko et al, 1976 ⁹⁰		50	23	
Gallus et al, 1973 ⁹¹		23	11	
Kakkar et al, 1972 ⁹²		50	20	
Lahnborg, 1980 ⁹³		69	28	
Montrey et al, 1985 ⁹⁴		81	22	
Morris & Mitchell, 1976 ⁹⁵		74	50	
Morris & Mitchell, 1977 ⁹⁶		76	49	
Myhre & Hølen, 1969 ⁹⁷		55	22	
Powers et al, 1989 ⁹⁸		63	29	
Rogers et al, 1978 ⁹⁹		37	19	
Svend-Hansen et al, 1981 ¹⁰⁰		65	28	
Xabregas et al, 1978 ¹⁰¹		25	12	
Total	15	805	353 (44%)	40% to 47%
Spinal Cord Injury				
Bors et al, 1954 ¹⁰²		99	58	
Brach et al, 1977 ¹⁰³		10	9	
Rossi et al, 1980 ¹⁰⁴		18	13	
Silver, 1974 ¹⁰⁵		32	8	
Watson, 1974 ¹⁰⁶		234	42	
Φουρβιε & Σασσηαροα, 1981 ¹⁰⁷		17	1	
Μεολι et al, 1988 ¹⁰⁸		17	8	
Myllynen et al, 1985 ¹⁰⁹		9	9	
Yelnik et al, 1991 ¹¹⁰		22	12	
Total	9	458	160 (35%)	31% to 39%
Retropubic Prostatectomy				
Becker et al, 1970 ¹¹¹		187	39	
Coe et al, 1978 ¹¹²		8	1	
Hedlund & Blomback, 1981 ¹¹³		28	13	
Kutnowski et al, 1977 ¹¹⁴		12	5	
Mayo et al, 1971 ¹¹⁵		41	21	
Nicolaidis et al, 1972 ¹¹⁶		21	10	
Vandendris et al, 1980 ¹¹⁷		33	13	
Williams, 1971 ¹¹⁸		5	4	
Total	8	335	106 (32%)	27% to 37%
Transurethral Prostatectomy				
Hedlund, 1975 ¹¹⁹		101	10	
Mayo et al, 1971 ¹¹⁵		20	2	
Nicolaidis et al, 1972 ¹¹⁶		29	2	
Total	3	150	14 (9%)	5% to 15%
Patients in ICU				
Moser et al, 1981 (FUT) ¹²⁰		33	4	
Cade, 1982 (FUT) ¹²¹		60	17	
Fraisse et al, 2000 (Venography) ¹²²		85	24	
Total	3	178	45 (25%)	19% to 32%
General Surgery				
Clagett & Reisch, 1988 ⁴⁶				
Total	3	54	1084 (25%)	24% to 26%

Table 1, contd.

Neurosurgery				
Skillman et al, 1978 ¹²³		48	11	
Turpie et al, 1977 ¹²⁴		63	12	
Turpie et al, 1985 ¹²⁵		68	12	
Turpie et al, 1989 ¹²⁶		81	16	
Zelikovski et al, 1981 ¹²⁷		20	10	
Total	5	280	61 (22%)	17% to 27%
Gynaecological surgery				
Malignancy				
Clarke-Pearson et al, 1983 ¹²⁸		97	12	
Clarke-Pearson et al, 1984 ¹²⁹		52	17	
Clarke-Pearson et al, 1990 ¹³⁰		103	19	
Walsh et al, 1974 ¹³¹		45	16	
Total	4	297	64 (22%)	17% to 26%
Myocardial infarction				
Emerson & Marks, 1977 ¹³²		41	14	
Handley, 1972 ¹³³		24	7	
Nicolaides et al, 1971 ¹³⁴		51	8	
Warlow et al, 1973 ¹³⁵		64	11	
Total	4	180	0 (22%)	16% to 28%
Abdominal vascular Surgery				
Hartsuck & Greenfield, 1973 ¹³⁶		26	7	
Angelides et al, 1977 ¹³⁷		88	18	
Belch et al, 1980 ¹³⁷		25	6	
Olin et al, 1993 ¹³⁹		50	9	
Killewich et al, 1997 ¹⁴⁰		48	1	
Hollyoak et al, 2001 ¹⁴¹		21	9	
Total	6	258	50 (19%)	15% to 25%
Peripheral vascular reconstruction				
Hamer et al, 1972 ¹⁴²		21	9	
Passman et al, 2000 ¹⁴³		53	1	
Hollyoak et al, 2001 ¹⁴⁴		28	5	
Total	3	102	15 (15%)	9% to 23%
Isolated Lower Limb Injuries				
Hjelmstedt & Bergwall, 1968 ¹⁴⁴		76	34	
Abelseth et al, 1996 ¹⁴⁵		82	18	
Kujath et al, 1993 ¹⁴⁶		127	21	
Kock et al, 1995 ¹⁴⁷		163	7	
Lassen et al, 2002 ¹⁴⁸		159	29	
Jorgensen et al, 2002 ¹⁴⁹		77	10	
Total	6	684	119 (17%)	15% to 20%
Gynaecological surgery				
Benign disease				
Ballard et al, 1973 ¹⁵⁰		55	16	
Bonnar & Walsh, 1972 ¹⁵¹		140	15	
Taberner et al, 1978 ¹⁵²		48	11	
Walsh et al, 1974 ¹³¹		217	21	
Total	4	460	63 (14%)	11% to 17%

Table 1, contd.

Elective Spinal Surgery				
West et al, 1992 ¹⁵³		41	6	
Oda et al, 2000 ¹⁵⁴		110	17	
Total	2	151	23 (15%)	10% to 22%
General Medical				
Gallus et al, 1973 ⁹¹		15	7	
Belch et al, 1981 ¹⁵⁵		50	13	
Prescott et al, 1981 ¹⁵⁶		45	4	
Cade, 1982 ¹²¹		67	7	
Dahan et al, 1986 ⁵¹		131	12	
Schonhofer & Kohler, 1998 ¹⁵⁷		196	21	
Samama et al, 1999 ¹⁵⁸		288	43	
Oger et al, 2002 ¹⁵⁹		234	14	
Leizotovicz et al, 2004 ⁴⁸⁵		1473	73	
Cohen et al, 2006 ⁴⁹⁵		323	34	
Total	10	2822	228 (8.1%)	7.1% to 9.1%
Burns				
Wait et al, 1990 ¹⁶⁰		71	14	
Wahl et al, 2002 ¹⁶¹		30	7	
Wibbenmeyer et al, 2003 ¹⁶²		148	9	
Total	3	249	30 (12%)	8.6% to 16%
Geriatric (>65 years)				
Dahan et al, 1986 ⁵¹	1	131	12 (9%)	5% to 15%
Knee Arthroscopy				
Stringer et al, 1989 ⁸⁴		48	2	
Demers et al, 1998 ¹⁶³		184	33	
Williams et al, 1995 ¹⁶⁴		85	3	
Jaureguito et al, 1999 ¹⁶⁵		239	5	
Delis et al, 2001 ¹⁶⁶		102	8	
Wirth et al, 2001 ¹⁶⁷		111	5	
Michot et al, 2002 ¹⁶⁸		63	10	
Total	7	832	66 (8%)	6% to 10%

Table II

The frequency of proximal DVT in the absence of prophylaxis diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods (fibrinogen uptake test or venography).

Patient groups	Number of Studies	Number of Patients	Incidence of DVT	95% CI
General surgery (Clagett & Reisch, 1988) ⁴⁶	16	1206	83 (6.9%)	5.5 to 8.3%
Elective hip replacement (Imperiale & Speroff, 1994) ¹¹	25	1436	330* (23%)	20.8 to 25.2%
Total knee replacement (Hull et al, 1979 ⁸⁰ Kim, 1990 ⁸¹ Leclerc et al, 1996 ⁸² Mckenna et al, 1976 ¹⁶⁹ Stringer et al, 1989 ⁸⁴ Stulberg et al, 1984 ⁸⁵ Wilson et al, 1991 ⁸⁶	7	536	41 (7.6%)	5.5 to 10.1%

* This number is an estimate from the percentage given in the paper.

Table III

The frequency of clinical pulmonary embolism* in the absence of prophylaxis.

Patient groups	Number of Studies	Number of Patients	Clinical PE	95% CI
General surgery (Clagett & Reisch, 1988) ⁴⁶	32	5091	82(1.6%)	1.3 to 2.0%
Elective hip replacement (Imperiale & Speroff, 1994) ¹¹	25	1436	57**(4%)	3.0 to 5.1%
Traumatic orthopaedic surgery (APTC,1994) ¹⁷⁰	11	494	34(6,9%)	4.8 to 9.5%

* In most of the studies using an objective method of screening for DVT, patients found to have proximal thrombosis were treated with anticoagulants; the true incidence of clinical pulmonary embolism in series without such screening and intervention is unknown.

** This number is an estimate from the percentage given in the paper.

Table IV

The frequency of fatal pulmonary embolism without prophylaxis.*

Patient groups	Number of Studies	Patients n	Incidence of fatal PE	95% CI
General surgery (Clagett & Reisch, 1988) ⁴⁶	33	5547	48(0.87%)	0.62% to 1.1%
Elective hip replacement (Collins et al, 1988) ⁴⁷	12	485	8(1.65%)	0.38% to 2.7%
Fractured neck of femur (Lassen & Borris, 1994) ¹⁷¹	23	1195	48(4.0%)	3.0% to 5.3%

* In most of the studies using an objective method of screening for DVT, patients found to have proximal thrombosis were treated with anticoagulants; the true incidence of fatal pulmonary embolism in the absence of intervention is unknown.

Table V

Mortality after elective hip replacement in the absence of routine pharmacological prophylaxis.

Author	Number of Patients	Follow-up	Total deaths	95% CI	Fatal PE	95% CI	Anti-coagulant use
Seagroatt et al 1991 ¹⁷²	11600	90 days	93 (1.10%)	0.87 to 1.31%	-	-	Very low
Sheppard et al 1981 ¹⁷³	3016	Inpatient	19 (0.63%)	0.38 to 0.98%	12 (0.40%)	0.20 to 0.70%	20%*
Warwick et al 1995 ¹⁷⁴	1162**	90 days	15 (1.30%)	0.73 to 2.10%	4 (0.34%)	0.09 to 0.90%	11%*
Wroblewski et al 1992 ¹⁷⁵ et al 1992	18104	1 year	362 (2.0%)	1.80 to 2.20%	1.27 (0.70%)	0.58 to 0.82%	-
Fender et al 1997 ¹⁷⁶	2111	42 days	19 (0.91%)	0.05 to 1.42%	4 (0.19%)	0.05 to 0.49	65%

* High risk patients received anticoagulation

** All patients wore thigh-length elastic stockings

- Information not available.

Table VI

The definition of risk categories in general surgical patients using FUT and in hospital pulmonary embolism (modified from Salzman and Hirsh, 1982)179124. Although based on old studies the percentages shown in this table are still used to define the category of risk.

Category	Frequency of calf vein thrombosis	Frequency of proximal vein thrombosis	Frequency of Fatal PE
High-risk	40-80%	10-30%	>1%
Moderate-risk	10-40%	1-10%	0.1-1%
Low-risk	<10%	<1%	<0.1%

Table VII

Risk categories according to clinical risk factors in non-orthopedic surgical patients

RISK CATEGORY	General Surgery	Gynaecology	Obstetrics*
HIGH	Major General Surgery, age >60	Major General Gynaecological Surgery, age >60	History of DVT/PE
	Major General Surgery, age 40-60 & cancer or history of DVT/PE	Major General Gynaecological Surgery, age 40-60 & cancer or history of DVT/PE	
	Thrombophilia	Thrombophilia	Thrombophilia
MODERATE	Major General Surgery, age 40-60 without other risk factors**	Major General Gynaecological Surgery, age 40-60	Age >35 years Caesarian section Obesity
	Minor surgery, age > 60	Major Gynaecological Surgery, age <40 on oestrogen therapy	
LOW	Minor surgery, age 40-60 with history of DVT/PE or on oestrogen therapy	Minor surgery, age > 60	
	Surgery, age <40 No other risk factors**	Minor Gynaecological surgery, age <40 without any other risk factors**	Age >35 years without any risk factors
	Minor surgery age 40-60 No other risk factors**	Minor Gynaecological surgery, age 40-60 without any other risk factors**	

* The risk of DVT in obstetric patients with pre-eclampsia and the other factors is unknown but prophylaxis should be considered.

** The risk is increased by infectious disease, presence of varicose veins, general immobility.

Minor surgery: Operations other than abdominal lasting less than 45 minutes

Major surgery: Any intra-abdominal operation and all other operations lasting more than 45 minutes.

Table VIII

Effect of graduated elastic compression stockings (GEC) in the prevention of DVT diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods in non-orthopedic surgical randomised controlled studies (fibrinogen uptake and/or phlebography)

Patient groups	Control Groups		Graduated Compression Stockings	
	Number of patients	DVT (%)	Number of patients	DVT (%)
Allan et al, 1983 ²⁴⁵ Gen surgery	103	37 (36)	97	15 (15)
Borow & Goldson, 1981 ²⁴⁶ Various surgical	89	32 (36)	91	14 (15)
Holford, 1976 ²⁴⁷ Major surg	48	23 (48)	47	11 (23)
Scurr et al, 1977 ²⁴⁸ Gen surgery	70	26 (37)	70	8 (11%)
Tsapogas et al, 1971 ²⁴⁹ Gen surgery	44	6 (14)	54	2 (4)
Turner et al, 1984 ²⁵⁰ Gynaec surg	92	4 (4)	104	0 (0)
Inada et al, 1983 ²⁵¹ Abdominal Surg	110	16 (14.5)	110	4 (3.6)
Turpie et al, 1989 ¹²⁶ Neurosurgery	81	16 (20)	80	7 (9)
Overall	637	160 (25)	653	61 (9)

Relative risk: 0.37 (95% CI 0.28 to 0.49)

Table IX

Effect of intermittent pneumatic compression (IPC) in the prevention of DVT diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods in non-orthopedic surgical randomized controlled studies (fibrinogen uptake test or phlebography)

Author	Control Groups		Intermittent Pneumatic Compression	
	Number of patients	DVT (%)	Number of patients	DVT (%)
Borow & Goldson, 1981 ²⁴⁶	89	32 (36)	79	9 (11)
Butson, 1981 ²⁵⁵	57	4 (7)	62	6 (10)
Clark et al, 1974 ^{256*}	36	7 (19)	37	1 (3)
Clarke-Pearson et al, 1984 ²⁵⁷	52	18 (35)	55	7 (13)
Coe et al, 1978 ¹¹²	24	6 (25)	29	2 (7)
Hills et al, 1972 ²⁵⁸	50	15 (30)	50	6(12)
Roberts & Cotton, 1974 ²⁵⁹	104	27 (26)	94	6 (6)
Sabri et al, 1971 ^{260*}	39	12 (31)	39	2 (5)
Skillman et al, 1978 ¹²³	48	12 (25)	47	4 (9)
Turpie et al, 1977 ¹²⁴	96	20 (21)	103	8 (8)
Turpie et al, 1979 ²⁶¹	63	12 (19)	65	1 (2)
Overall	658	165 (26)	660	52 (8)

Relative risk: 0.31 (95% CI 0.33 to 0.42)

*Contralateral leg was used as the control

Table X

Effect of antiplatelet therapy (e.g. aspirin) in the prevention of DVT diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods (fibrinogen uptake in general surgery and phlebography in orthopedic surgery) in randomized controlled studies (Antiplatelet Trialists' Collaboration, 1994).¹⁷⁰

Type of patient	Control Groups*					Antiplatelet Groups	
	Number of trials with data	Patients n	DVT (%)	Patients n	DVT (%)	RR	95% CI
General surgery	22	1459	396 (27)	1434	278 (19)	0.71	0.62 to 0.82
Orthopedic Traumatic	10	444	186 (42)	454	163 (36)	0.86	0.73 to 1.0
Orthopedic Elective	13	436	232 (53)	427	160 (37)	0.70	0.61 to 0.82
High risk medical	8	266	61 (23)	261	39 (15)	0.65	0.45 to 0.94

*In most trials patients were allocated evenly to antiplatelet therapy or control, but in some more were deliberately allocated to active treatment. To allow direct comparison between percentages adjusted control totals were calculated, (actual DVT incidence in surgical controls 700/2050; all medical trials evenly balanced).

Table XI

Effect of antiplatelet therapy (e.g. aspirin) in the prevention of PE in randomized controlled studies (Antiplatelet Trialists' Collaboration, 1994).^{170,170,262}

Type of patient	Control Groups*					Antiplatelet Groups	
	Number of trials with data	Number of Patients	PE	Number of Patients	PE	RR	95% CI
General surgery	26	3419	58(1.7%)	3408	16(0.5%)	0.28	0.16 to 0.48
Orthopedic Traumatic	11	494	34(6.9%)	504	14(2.8%)	0.40	0.22 to 0.71
Orthopedic Elective	16	537	29(5.4%)	529	14(2.6%)	0.49	0.26 to 0.92
High risk medical	9	280	8(2.9%)	275	3(1.1%)	0.38	0.10 to 1.42

*In most trials patients were allocated evenly to antiplatelet therapy or control, but in some more were deliberately allocated to active treatment. To allow direct comparison between percentages adjusted control totals were calculated, (actual DVT incidence in surgical controls 700/2050; all medical trials evenly balanced).

Table XII

Effect of low dose heparin (LDH) versus low dose heparin (LDH) and graduated elastic compression (GEC) in the prevention of DVT in non-orthopedic surgical patients diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods (fibrinogen uptake test and/or phlebography).

	GEC		LDH & GEC		
Author	Number of patients	DVT	Number of patients	DVT	Surgical Procedure
Borow & Goldson, 1983 ²⁶³	106	15(14%)	63	2(3%)	General surgery & Orthopedics
Moser & Froidevaux, 1976 ²⁶⁴	20	5(25%)	20	2(10%)	General surgery
Nicolaidis et al, 1972 ¹¹⁶	122	29(24%)	122	1(1%)	Prostatectomy
Rasmussen et al, 1988 ²⁶⁵	74	22(30%)	89	23(26%)	General surgery
Overall	322	71(22%)	294	28(9.5%)	

Relative risk: 0.47 (95% CI 0.33 to 0.69)

Table XIII

Effect of low dose heparin (LDH) versus low dose heparin (LDH) and graduated elastic compression (GEC) in the prevention of DVT in non-orthopedic surgical patients diagnosed by surveillance with objective methods (fibrinogen uptake test and/or phlebography).

Author	LDH		LDH & GEC	
	Number of patients	DVT	Number of patients	DVT
Borow & Goldson, 1983 ²⁶³	86	23 (26%)	63	2 (3%)
Moser & Froidevaux, 1976 ²⁶⁴	15	0	20	2 (10%)
Rasmussen et al, 1988 ²⁶⁵	85	25 (29%)	89	23 (26%)
Torngren 1980 ²⁶⁶	98	12 (12%)	98	4 (4%)
Wille-Jorgensen et al, 1985 ²⁶⁷	86	11 (13%)	90	2 (2%)
Wille-Jorgensen et al, 1991 ²⁶⁸	81	12 (15%)	79	2 (3%)
Overall	451	83 (18%)	439	35 (8%)

Relative risk: 0.47 (95% CI 0.33 to 0.69)

Table XIV

Recommended management strategies for various clinical situations. (NB. specialist advice for individualized management of patients is advisable in many of these situations)

Clinical Situation	Recommended Management
Single previous VTE (not pregnancy or ‘pill’ related) associated with a transient risk factor and no additional current risk factors, such as obesity.	<p>Antenatal: surveillance or prophylactic doses of LMWH ± GEC stockings. Discuss decision regarding antenatal LMWH with the woman.</p> <p>Postpartum: anticoagulant therapy for at least 6 weeks ± GEC stockings.</p>
Single previous idiopathic VTE or pregnancy or COC related previous VTE or VTE with underlying thrombophilia and not on long-term anticoagulant therapy, or single previous VTE and additional current risk factor(s) (eg morbid obesity, nephrotic syndrome).	<p>Antenatal: prophylactic doses of LMWH ± GEC stockings. NB: there is a strong case for more intense LMWH therapy in antithrombin deficiency</p> <p>Postpartum: anticoagulant therapy for at least 6 weeks ± GEC stockings.</p>
More than one previous episode of VTE, with no thrombophilia and not on long-term anticoagulant therapy	<p>Antenatal: prophylactic doses of LMWH + GEC stockings.</p> <p>Postpartum: anticoagulant therapy for at least 6 weeks + GEC stockings.</p>
Previous episode(s) of VTE in women receiving long-term anticoagulants (eg with underlying thrombophilia)	<p>Antenatal: switch from oral anticoagulants to LMWH therapy before 6 weeks gestation + GEC stockings.</p> <p>Postpartum: resume long-term anticoagulants with LMWH overlap until INR in pre-pregnancy therapeutic range + GEC stockings.</p>
Thrombophilia (confirmed laboratory abnormality) but no prior VTE.	<p>Antenatal: surveillance or prophylactic LMWH ± GEC stockings. The indication for LMWH in the antenatal period is stronger in AT deficient, women than the other thrombophilias, in symptomatic kindred compared to asymptomatic kindred and also where additional risk factors are present.</p> <p>Postpartum: anticoagulant therapy for at least 6 weeks ± GEC stockings.</p>
Following caesarean section	<p>Carry out risk assessment for VTE. If an additional risk factor such as emergency section in labour, age over 35 years, high BMI etc present provide thromboprophylaxis at least until discharge from hospital *</p>
Following vaginal delivery.	<p>Carry out risk assessment for VTE. If two or more additional risk factors such as age over 35 years, high BMI etc present consider thromboprophylaxis ± GEC stockings at least until discharge from hospital*.</p>

* NB where multiple risk factors are present consider extended prophylaxis after discharge.

Table XV

Guidelines for antenatal prophylactic and therapeutic doses of LMWH (RCOG 2004³¹⁰)

Prophylaxis	Prophylaxis	Enoxaparin (100 units/mg)	Tinzaparin*
Normal body Weight	40 mg daily	5000 units daily	4500 units daily
Body weight < 50 kg	20 mg daily	2500 units daily	3500 units daily
Body weight >90 kg	40 mg 12 hourly	5000 units 12 hourly	4500 units 12-hourly
Therapeutic dose	1mg/kg 12 hourly	90units/kg 12-hourly	90units/kg 12-hourly

*Recent reports recommend Tinzaparin in daily dosage of 75units/kg for prophylaxis and 175units/kg for therapeutic dosage in pregnancy

Table XVI

Effect of intermittent pneumatic compression (IPC) in the prevention of DVT diagnosed by surveillance with phlebography or duplex ultrasound* (Fisher et al, 1995)³⁴³ in randomized controlled studies of orthopedic patients

	Control Groups (No prophylaxis)		IPC		Procedure
Author	Number of patients	DVT (%)	Number of patients	DVT (%)	
A. HIP REPLACEMENT					
Gallus et al, 1983 ⁶⁴	47	25 (53.2)	43	15 (34.9)	Hip (elective)
Hartman et al, 1982 ³⁴⁴	52	10 (19)	53	1 (1.9)	Hip (elective & fracture)
Hull et al, 1990 ⁶⁸	158	77 (49)	152	36 (24)	Hip (elective)
Overall	257	112 (43.6)	248	52 (21.0)	
Relative risk: 0.48 (95% CI 0.36 to 0.64)					
B. KNEE REPLACEMENT					
Haas et al, 1990 ³⁴⁵	36 (Aspirin)	17 (47)	36	8 (22)	
Hull et al, 1979 ⁸⁰	29	19 (65.5)	32	2 (6.3)	
Overall	65	36 (55.4)	68	10 (14.7.0)	
Relative risk: 0.27 (95% CI 0.14 to 0.49)					

Table XVII

Effect of prophylaxis using the combination of foot impulse technology (FIT) with graduated elastic compression (GEC) on proximal DVT, in orthopedic patients

Author and diagnostic method	Control Method of prophylaxis			Foot Impulse Technology plus Additional method of prophylaxis	
		n	Proximal DVT	n	Proximal DVT
Hip surgery					
Bradley et al, 1993 ³⁴⁶ VG	GEC	44	11(25%)	30	2(6.7%)
Fordyce & Ling 1992 ³⁴⁷ VG	GEC	40	13(32%)	39	2(5%)
Santori et al, 1994 ³⁴⁸ US	LDUH	65	13(20%)	67	2(3.0%)
Warwick et al, 1998 ³⁴⁹ VG	LMWH +GEC	138	27(17.4%)	136	12(9%)
Pitto et al, 2004 ³⁵⁰ US	LMWH	100	6(6%)	100	3(3%)
Knee surgery					
Blanchard et al, 1999 ³⁵¹ VG	LMWH	60	2(3.3%)	48	4(8.3%)
Wilson et al, 1992 ⁸⁶ VG	Nil	23	6(19%)	28	0
Westrich et al, 1996 ³⁴² VG	Aspirin	83	49(59%)	81	22 (27%)
Warwick et al, 2002 ³⁵² VG	LMWH	99	57(58%)	98	48(54%)
Hip fracture					
Stranks et al, 1992 ³⁵³ US	GEC	39	9(23%)	41	0

VG: Venography; US: Ultrasound

Table XVIII

Effect of warfarin versus low molecular weight heparin (LMWH) in the prevention of DVT diagnosed by surveillance with phlebography in patients having knee surgery.

Author	Warfarin		LMWH	
	Number of patients	DVT	Number of patients	DVT
Heit et al, 1997 ³⁵⁴	222	85 (38%)	231	62 (27%)
Hull et al, 1993 ³⁵⁵	277	152 (55%)	258	116 (45%)
Leclerc et al, 1996 ⁸²	211	109 (52%)	206	76 (37%)
RDHAG 1994 ³⁵⁶	147	60 (41%)	299	78 (26%)
Fitzgerald et al, 2001 ³⁵⁷	176	80 (45%)	173	44 (25%)
Hamulyak et al, 1995 ³⁵⁸	61	23 (38%)	65	16 (25%)
Overall	1033	486 (47%)	1167	376 (32%)

Relative risk: 0.68 (95% CI 0.62 to 0.76)

TABLE XIX

Incidence of thrombosis in early-stage breast cancer

Study	Treatment	Number of Patient	Patient with thrombosis %
Node-Negative			
Fisher 1990 ⁵¹⁶	T	1318	0.9
	Placebo	1326	0.15
	CMFT	768	4.2
	T	771	0.8
Node-Positive			
Levine 1988 ⁴⁷⁸	CMFVP	102	8.8
	CMFVP + AT	103	4.9
Pritchard 1996 ⁵¹⁷	CMF + T	353	9.6
	T	352	1.4
Clahsen 1994 ⁵¹⁹	Perioperative FAC	1292	2.1
Rivkin 1994 ⁵²¹	No Rx	1332	0.8
	CMFVP + T	303	3.6
	CMFVP	300	1.3
Fisher 1990 ⁵¹⁶	T	295	0
	ACT	383	3.1
Weiss 1981 ⁵¹⁸	T	367	1.6
	CMFVP	143	6.3
	CMF	144	3.5

A indicates adriamycin; C, cyclophosphamide; F, fluorouracil; M, methotrexate; P, prednisone, T, tamoxifen; V, vincristine

TABLE XX

Incidence of thrombosis in patients with different tumors

Study	Tumour	Patient Number	Thrombosis (%)
Brandes et al, 1997 ⁴⁶⁷	Malignant glioma	75	24.0
Weijl et al, 2000 ⁵²²	Germ cell	179	8.4
Ottinger et al, 1995 ⁵²³	Non-Hodgkins		
	Lymphoma	593	6.6
Clarke et al, 1990 ⁵²⁴	Non-Hodgkins		
	Lymphoma	85	4.7
Von Tempelhoff et al, 2000 ⁵²⁵	Ovarian	47	10.6

TABLE XXI

Major bleeding complication rate according to INR intensity

Trial	INR Range	Event Rate per 100 person-years
Kearon, et al, 1999 ⁶³⁰	2.0-3.0	3.8
Schulman et al, 1997 ⁵⁷⁵	2.0-2.85	2.4
Kearon et al, 2003 ⁶³¹	2.0-3.0	0.9
Kearon et al, 2003 ⁶³¹	1.5-1.9	1.1
Ridker et al, 2003 ⁶³²	1.5-2.0	0.9

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