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Changing role of warfarin in a cardiology outpatient department - A single centre experience from a state tertiary care hospital in Sri Lanka.

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Introduction: Although Non-Vitamin K Oral Anticoagulants (NOACs) have come into prominence recently, warfarin remains the only affordable and available anticoagulant in the state health sector in Sri Lanka. Valvular and non-valvular Atrial Fibrillation (AF) has remained the commonest primary indication for anticoagulation worldwide.

Objective: We studied the primary indications for anticoagulation, the role of warfarin and the adequacy of achieving the therapeutic goal in the outpatient cardiology clinic of Teaching Hospital-Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Methodology: This is a descriptive retrospective study. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data over a period of eight weeks from January 2019.

Results: Of the total 362 patients, half of them (50.28%) were fitted with a metallic prosthetic valve and this was the commonest primary indication for anticoagulation in all age groups except in those over 70 years. Un-operated Valvular AF was seen in 35.08% and non-valvular AF in 8.84% of patients. 85.36% of patients had either prosthetic valves or unoperated valvular AF. Although only 27.9% of patients had all three consecutive International Normalized Ratio (INR) measurements within the target therapeutic range in the previous three months, 66.3% of patients had “adequate control” based on time in target range (TTR). A significant shift in the indications for warfarin therapy was observed.

Conclusion: A significant shift in the indications for anticoagulation, with the majority of patients receiving anticoagulation primarily for the presence of mechanical prosthetic valves is noted from this study and also sub optimal therapeutic target of INR was observed.