ATRIAL FIBRILLATION PATIENTS AND RISK OF STROKE

WHAT IS AF?
Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a condition in which the heart sends rapid, disorganised electrical signals creating an irregular heartbeat that can cause blood to pool and lead to a blood clot. Blood clots can travel to the brain and trigger a stroke.

BURDEN OF STROKE IN AF
AF is responsible for about 1 in 5 strokes caused by blood clots. Stroke is 5x more likely for patients with AF.

RISK FACTORS FOR STROKE IN AF
- Age
- Sex
- Diabetes
- Previous stroke
- Congestive heart failure
- Hypertension
- Vascular disease

GUIDELINES AND RISK SCORES
Scoring schemes, such as CHA2DS2-VASc, help doctors to classify patients with AF according to their risk of stroke, to facilitate decisions on antithrombotic treatment.

AF guidelines recommend that antithrombotic therapy should be individualised based on the patient's stroke risk. Guidelines use risk scores to help doctors determine:
- Low risk – Does not need anticoagulation
- Medium risk – May need anticoagulation
- High risk – Does need anticoagulation

MANAGING LOW-RISK PATIENTS
- Risk assessment now focuses on improved identification of truly low-risk AF patients who do not need antithrombotic therapy
- Improved risk stratification tools are needed to help identify truly low-risk patients
- Real-world data can help with the understanding of everyday clinical practice, providing information about under-represented low-risk AF patients for whom disease management may be challenging

GARFIELD-AF is an independent academic research initiative led by an international steering committee under the auspices of the Thrombosis Research Institute (TRI)

The GARFIELD-AF registry is funded by an unrestricted research grant from Bayer Pharma AG

References