

PHARMACOLOGICAL CARIOVERSION IN PATIENTS WITH RECENT-ONSET ATRIAL FIBRILLATION AT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT: EFFICACY AND SAFETY OF VERNAKALANT

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BACKGROUND

- **Atrial fibrillation (AF)** is one of the most common clinically significant cardiac arrhythmias. The management of AF includes **conversion to sinus rhythm (SR)**. **Vernakalant** is a multi-channel blocker that **has effectively converted recent-onset AF** and has been well tolerated in placebo-controlled studies.

PURPOSE

- To assess the **efficacy and safety** of **vernakalant** for the **pharmacological conversion of AF to SR**.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- **Retrospective study** conducted at **Emergency Department (ED)**, including all patients receiving treatment with vernakalant from March 2012 to May 2015.
- **Variables** included in the analysis were:
 - ✓ Age
 - ✓ Gender
 - ✓ Comorbidities
 - ✓ Type of AF
 - ✓ Progression time of AF
 - ✓ Cardioversion effectiveness
 - ✓ Serious and minor side effects
 - ✓ Average stay in ED and recurrence rate

RESULTS

- **43 patients** with a diagnosis of recent-onset AF treated with vernakalant were included.
- **Mean age** was **68.8±11.9 years**. **51.2%** were woman.
- **Comorbidities:**
 - ✓ Arterial hypertension (65.1%)
 - ✓ Diabetes (27.9%)
 - ✓ Previous acute myocardial infarction (11.6%)
 - ✓ Valvulopathy (7%)
 - ✓ Previous stroke (7%)
- **Type of AF:**
 - ✓ 65.1% paroxysmal AF
 - ✓ 34.9% first diagnosed
- **Progression time of AF before cardioversion :**
 - ✓ Less than 12 hours: 79.1%
 - ✓ Less than 24 hours: 4.7%
 - ✓ In 24-48 hours: 16.3%
- **Cardioversion effectiveness:**
 - ✓ Effective in **37 patients (86%):**
 - ✓ 29 patients (67.4%) converted directly after the first dose
 - ✓ 8 patients (18.6%) required a second dose
- **Serious and minor side effects:**
 - ✓ Tachycardia 11.6%,
 - ✓ Hypotension 7%,
 - ✓ Flutter during infusion 4.7%,
 - ✓ Sneezing 2.3%
 - ✓ Dysgeusia 2.3%
- **Average stay in ED and recurrence rate:**
 - ✓ Average stay in ED: 14.3±10.9 h.
 - ✓ 76.7% maintained sinus rhythm.

CONCLUSIONS

- **Vernakalant** presented a **high success rate in restoring SR, rapid onset of action and an acceptable safety profile**. Hospital discharge was rapid after cardioversion, reducing the length of stay in the ED.