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# Introduction

A diagnosis resulting in the need for long-term anticoagulation therapy can have an enormous effect on the lifestyle of the patient and their family.

# Impact of a diagnosis requiring anticoagulation

- Anxiety regarding medical condition
- Effect on quality of life
- Effect on work life
- Effect on family life

# Effect of anticoagulation therapy on patients

Treatment factors

Risk associated with anticoagulation therapy  
Clinic visits  
Lack of information  
Possible food and drink restrictions  
Anxieties regarding INR results: too high, too low  
Relationship with clinic staff  
Inconvenience of attending clinic  
Treatment duration  
Impact on lifestyle

Psychological factors

Hypersensitivity to condition  
Health anxiety  
Fear of dying  
Fear of recurrence  
Sense of own mortality  
Anger  
Denial  
Treatment issues causing stress  
Lack of control  
Loss of self-worth  
Loss of identity  
Fear of the unknown  
Fear of further events  
No longer attractive to partner  
Fear of travelling far from home  
Therapy affects whole family  
Why me?

Physical factors

Physical symptoms of AF / VTE  
PTS  
Fear of recurrence  
Pain and fatigue  
Recovery  
Misinterpretation of symptoms  
No longer attractive to partner  
'Disabled'  
Activities restricted  
Loss of image

*Adapted from Hunter et al. 2016*

# Treatment factors

- Risk associated with anticoagulation therapy
- Clinic visits
- Lack of information
- Possible food and drink restrictions
- Anxieties regarding INR results: too high, too low
- Relationship with clinic staff
- Inconvenience of attending clinic
- Treatment duration
- Impact on lifestyle

# Physical factors

Physical symptoms of AF/VTE

PTS

Pain and fatigue

Recovery

Misinterpretation of condition/treatments

Feeling 'disabled'

Activities restricted

Loss of image

# Psychological factors

- Hypersensitivity to condition
- Health anxiety
- Fear of dying
- Sense of own mortality
- Anger
- Denial
- Treatment issues causing stress
- Lack of control
- Fear of recurrence
- Loss of self-worth
- Loss of identity
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of further events
- Fear of travelling far from home
- Therapy affects whole family
- Why me?

# Case Study - George

- Male
- 65 years old
- Office worker
  
- AF
- Warfarin
  
- George is an active working man with an equally active wife. He loves travel, especially last minute deals. He loves football and golf and socialising with friends.
- He has 2 grown up children.



# George has many concerns

- Warfarin is an inconvenience. I feel like an old man waiting in the clinic to have my blood checked!
- It drives my wife mad as we cannot just up and go on holiday anymore, plus I am limited in what I can eat and drink. It really gets me down!
- My INR is never in range now so I have to keep going back to the clinic, though it's my own fault as I don't take my Warfarin as prescribed. If I feel well, why should I take Warfarin?

# George's family have concerns

- The Warfarin therapy really frightens us! What if George needs his blood checking when we are on holiday?
- Dad is so miserable these days, he rarely goes on holiday anymore, he's governed by his Warfarin and going to the INR clinic!
- We all worry George might have a stroke if he doesn't take his Warfarin, but we hate to see him so unhappy!

# Discussion

- ▣ How can we help allay George's fears, concerns and anxieties?
- ▣ How can we reassure him?
- ▣ What are the options available to us to help him achieve the optimum lifestyle while undertaking anticoagulation therapy?

# What can we as healthcare professionals do?

- Involve patient in treatment plans
- Explanation of medication and effects of treatment
- Encourage therapy compliance
- Jointly explore options

# Conclusion

- ▣ There will always be a need for Warfarin therapy, such as for those patients where DOACs are contraindicated. Even patients who could take Direct Oral AntiCoagulants(DOAC's) may prefer the social aspects of attending the INR clinic!
- ▣ Considering the patient's lifestyle when making the decision as to which anticoagulant to use is fast becoming a fundamental part of the decision-making process
- ▣ It is a part of the process in which we, as healthcare professionals, will play a major role to provide our patients with information to help decide the most optimal treatment for them

Thank you

