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Overview and Introduction

Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is the most common cardiac arrhythmia. Many studies demonstrate an increasing prevalence with persistent or permanent forms affecting 10-15% of the population aged over 75 years.¹⁻² Cost of hospitalisation, loss of work force and direct medical cost impose both a clinical and economic burden.³⁻⁵ Acute Medical Units (AMU) are the first point of assessment. In view of the increasing prevalence of AF and its impact on cost we decided to undertake a prospective audit.

Methods

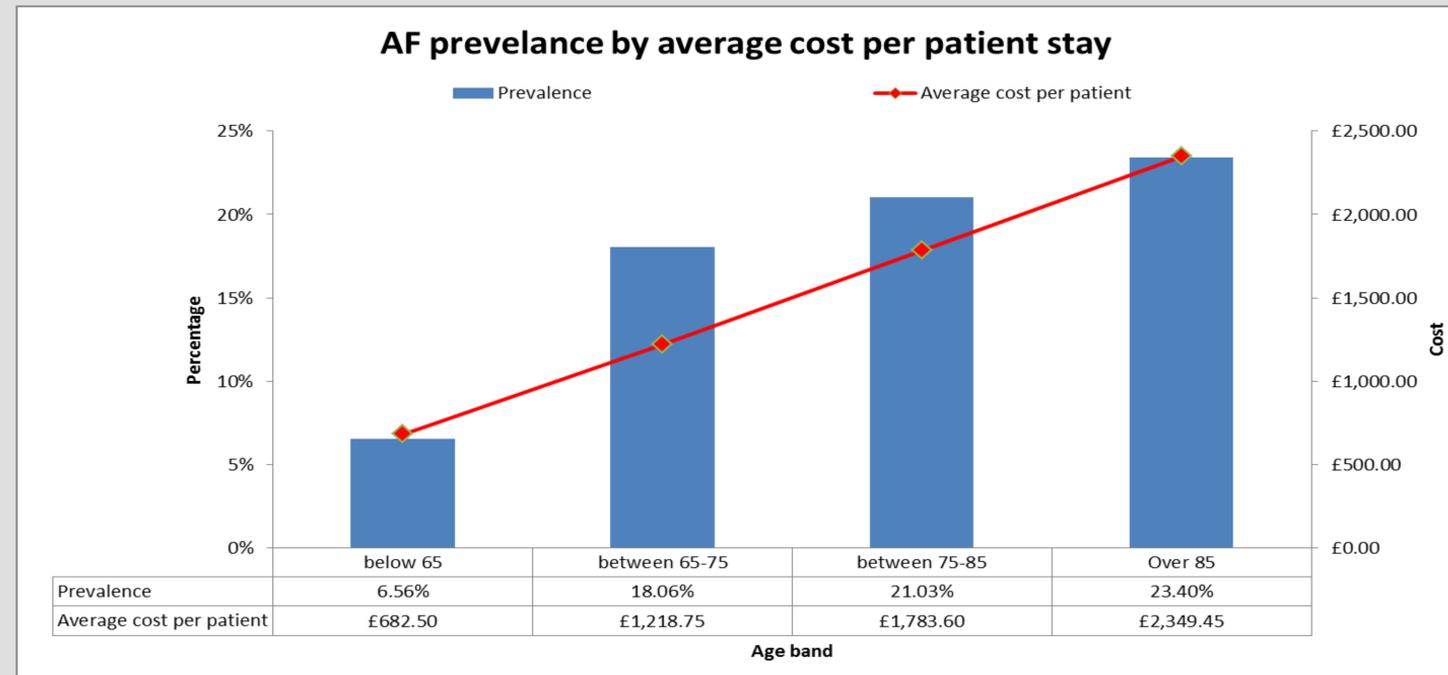
Aims: To assess the prevalence and financial burden of managing AF over a 1-month period.

Methods: Prospective audit of patients attending AMU between 28/6/2015 to 27/7/2015. Weight, blood pressure, heart rate, systemic examination, chest x-ray, ECG, CRP and thyroid functions were recorded. AF was confirmed by ECG. The number of days in hospital and total cost were calculated (NHS reference costs 2012 – 2013).

Results

- 815 patients attended AMU; 125 suffered from AF
- 63 were males and 62 were females.
- The average age was 76.4 (range 30 – 96 years).
- The average prevalence was 15.5%.
- Data was categorised by age <65, 66-75, 76 – 85 and >85, of which the prevalence was 6.56, 18.06, 21.03 and 23.40 respectively.
- The average cost per day per bed was £273.00.
- Average hospital stay was 2.5 days (aged <65), 4.45 (aged 66-75), 6.53 (aged 76-85) and 8.61 (aged >85) and the average cost was £682.50, £1218.25, £1783.60 and £2349.45 for each age group.
- **5.5% of the patients had paroxysmal AF.**

The association between prevalence and cost of AF with age



Conclusions

Our results show the prevalence and cost of AF is higher in patients over 75 years of age. The cost and hospital stay progressively increased with age. Thus, care provision structures in the United Kingdom will be challenged by requirements to treat more patients with AF in the future. It imposes a substantial economic as well as healthcare burden. This is likely to be true in other countries too.

References:

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No conflict of interest declared.