

Decision-Making Tool for Treating Patients with Nonvalvular Atrial Fibrillation

Step 1. Determine the patient's annual risk of stroke using the two clinical decision rules shown below:

ACCP Rule

Features	Risk group	Annual stroke rate, % (95% CI)
History of stroke or TIA; hypertension; heart failure; age older than 75 years; or more than one moderate risk factor	High	3.0 (2.5 to 3.8)
Age 65 to 75 years, diabetes mellitus or coronary artery disease; not high risk	Moderate	1.0 (0.4 to 2.2)
Not moderate or high risk	Low	0.5 (0.1 to 2.2)

CHADS₂ Rule

Risk Factor	Points
Congestive heart failure	1
Hypertension	1
Age older than 75 years	1
Diabetes mellitus	1
Prior stroke or TIA	2
Total points:	

Risk score interpretation

Point totals	Risk group	Annual stroke rate, % (95% CI)
3 or more	High	5.3 (3.3 to 8.4)
1 or 2	Moderate	2.7 (2.2 to 3.4)
0	Low	0.8 (0.4 to 1.7)

Step 2. If patient is high or low risk under both rules, select the most appropriate treatment:

Low or moderate risk by ACCP and low risk by CHADS₂: aspirin only recommended

High risk by ACCP and moderate or high risk by CHADS₂: oral anticoagulation with warfarin recommended

Step 3. If patient is moderate risk or above risk assessment is inconsistent, estimate bleeding risk and weigh risks and benefits with patient.

Outpatient Bleeding Risk Index

Risk Factor	Points
Age at least 65 years	1
History of GI tract bleeding	1
History of stroke	1
Recent MI, hematocrit lower than 30 percent, creatinine higher than 1.5, or diabetes mellitus	1
Total points:	

Risk score interpretation

Point total	Risk group	Major bleeds per total number of patients
0	Low	0 per 128
1 or more	High	5 per 92

Figure 1. Decision-making tool for choosing between warfarin (Coumadin) and aspirin therapy in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation. (ACCP = American College of Chest Physicians; CI = confidence interval; TIA = transient ischemic attack; CHADS₂ = congestive heart failure, hypertension, age older than 75 years, diabetes, and history of stroke or TIA; GI = gastrointestinal; MI = myocardial infarction.)