NEW/NOVEL ORAL ANTICOAGULANTS (NOACS): PERI-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE:
To provide guidance for the peri-operative management of patients who are receiving a new/novel oral anticoagulant (NOAC) and require an elective surgery/procedure. (For guidance on management of patients who require an urgent or emergency surgery/procedure, please refer to the Perioperative Anticoagulant Management Algorithm found on the Thrombosis Canada website under the “Tools” tab.)

BACKGROUND:
Three NOACs (apixaban, dabigatran, rivaroxaban) are approved for clinical use in Canada based on findings from large randomized trials.

The peri-operative management of NOAC-treated patients aims to interrupt anticoagulant therapy (if necessary) so there is no (or minimal) residual anticoagulant effect at the time of surgery, and to ensure timely but careful resumption after surgery so as to not incur an increased risk for post-operative bleeding.

There are 3 important considerations for peri-operative management of patients taking a NOAC:

1) Reliable laboratory tests to confirm the absence of a residual anticoagulant effect of NOACs are not widely available.

2) Half-lives of NOACs differ and increase with worsening renal function, affecting when the drug should be stopped before surgery.

3) NOACs have rapid onset of action, with a peak anticoagulant effect occurring 1-2 hours after oral intake.

In the absence of laboratory tests to reliably measure their anticoagulant effect, the peri-operative administration of NOACs should be influenced by:

1) Drug elimination half-life (with normal renal function),

2) Effect of renal function on drug elimination half-life, and

3) Bleeding risk associated with the surgery/procedure type, and

4) Whether patient is to receive spinal/epidural anesthesia.
EVIDENCE SUPPORTING PERI-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS TAKING A NOAC:

There are emerging data relating to the efficacy and safety of the proposed peri-operative management of NOAC-treated patients. In RELY, a trial comparing dabigatran (150 mg or 110 mg) with warfarin for stroke prevention in atrial fibrillation, there were >4,500 patients who had anticoagulant interruption for a surgery/procedure. The incidence of peri-operative bleeding was similar in dabigatran- and warfarin-treated patients, suggesting that dabigatran-treated patients can be safely managed peri-operatively. Similar findings have been observed for the peri-operative management of apixaban-treated and rivaroxaban-treated patients.

PERI-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT:

Patients Receiving Dabigatran

**Pre-Operative Management (Table 1):**

- **Minor surgery/procedure:** Stop dabigatran 1 day before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 2 doses before a surgery/procedure), which corresponds to approximately 2 half-lives elapsed between stopping dabigatran and surgery. There may be a 12-25% anticoagulant effect at the time of surgery, which is acceptable for a minor surgery/procedure.

- **Major surgery/procedure including neuraxial anesthesia:** Stop dabigatran 2 or 4 days before surgery (i.e. skip 4 or 8 doses), which corresponds to approximately 4-5 half-lives elapsed between stopping dabigatran and surgery. This ensures minimal (3-6%) residual anticoagulant effect at the time of surgery and allows patients to have spinal anesthesia or high bleeding risk surgery (e.g. intracranial or cardiac).

- If renal function is moderately impaired (CrCl 30-49 mL/min), 1-2 additional days of interruption is required to ensure elimination of any residual anticoagulant effect, as 80% of dabigatran is cleared by the kidneys.

**Post-Operative Management (Table 2):**

Resumption of dabigatran 150 mg or 110 mg twice daily should be done cautiously after major surgery or in patients at increased bleeding risk, as this is a therapeutic-dose which is higher than that used for post-operative VTE prevention (See Thromboprophylaxis: Orthopedic Surgery guide).

Patients Receiving Rivaroxaban

**Pre-Operative Management (Table 1):**

- **Minor surgery/procedure:** Stop rivaroxaban 1 day before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 1 dose), which corresponds to approximately 2 half-lives elapsed between stopping rivaroxaban and surgery.
• **Major surgery/procedure including neuraxial anesthesia:** Stop rivaroxaban 2 days before surgery (i.e. skip 2 doses), which corresponds to approximately 4-5 half-lives elapsed between stopping rivaroxaban and surgery.

**Post-Operative Management (Table 2):**

Resumption of rivaroxaban 20 mg (or 15 mg if usual dose) once daily should be done cautiously after major surgery or in patients at increased bleeding risk, as this is a therapeutic-dose which is higher than that used for post-operative VTE prevention (See Thromboprophylaxis: Orthopedic Surgery guide).

Patients Receiving Apixaban

**Pre-Operative Management (Table 1):**

• **Minor surgery/procedure:** Stop apixaban 1 day before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 2 doses), which corresponds to approximately 2 half-lives elapsed between stopping apixaban and surgery.

• **Major surgery/procedure including neuraxial anesthesia:** Stop apixaban 2 days before surgery (i.e. skip 4 doses), which corresponds to approximately 4-5 half-lives elapsed between stopping apixaban and surgery.

**Post-Operative Management (Table 2):**

Resumption of apixaban 5 mg twice daily should be done cautiously after major surgery or in patients at increased bleeding risk, as this is a therapeutic-dose which is higher than that for post-operative VTE prevention (See Thromboprophylaxis: Orthopedic Surgery guide).

**TABLE 1. SUGGESTED GUIDE FOR PRE-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS RECEIVING A NOAC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRUG (DOSE REGIMEN)</th>
<th>RENAL FUNCTION</th>
<th>MINOR SURGERY/PROCEDURE* (LOW BLEEDING RISK)</th>
<th>MAJOR SURGERY/PROCEDURE INCLUDING NEURAXIAL PROCEDURES*† (HIGH BLEEDING RISK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dabigatran (twice daily)</td>
<td>Normal renal function or mild impairment (CrCl &gt;50 mL/min) t1/2 7-17 hours</td>
<td>Give last dose 2 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 2 doses)</td>
<td>Give last dose 3 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 4 doses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate renal impairment (CrCl 30-49 mL/min)</td>
<td>Give last dose 3 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 4 doses)</td>
<td>Give last dose 5 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 8 doses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


$t_{1/2}$ 17-20 hours

**Rivaroxaban** (once daily)

Normal renal function, mild or moderate impairment (CrCl $>30$ mL/min)

$t_{1/2}$ 7-11 hours

Give last dose 2 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 1 dose)

Give last dose 3 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 2 doses)

**Apixaban** (twice daily)

Normal renal function, mild or moderate impairment (CrCl $>30$ mL/min)

$t_{1/2}$ 8-12 hours

Give last dose 2 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 2 doses)

Give last dose 3 days before surgery/procedure (i.e. skip 4 doses)

*No anticoagulant taken on the day of surgery/procedure.
†Neuraxial procedures include spinal anesthesia, epidural catheter insertion and epidural catheter removal.

**TABLE 2. SUGGESTED GUIDE FOR POST-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS RECEIVING A NOAC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRUG</th>
<th>MINOR SURGERY/PROCEDURE (LOW BLEEDING RISK)</th>
<th>MAJOR SURGERY/PROCEDURE (HIGH BLEEDING RISK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dabigatran</td>
<td>Resume on day after surgery (~24 hours post-operative)</td>
<td>Resume 2 days after surgery (~48 hours post-operative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivaroxaban</td>
<td>Resume on day after surgery (~24 hours post-operative)</td>
<td>Resume 2 days after surgery (~48 hours post-operative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apixaban</td>
<td>Resume on day after surgery (~24 hours post-operative)</td>
<td>Resume 2 days after surgery (~48 hours post operative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

**Patients having Minor Procedures:**

In NOAC-treated patients who require dental procedures (e.g. extraction, root canal), cataract surgery or minor skin procedures, it is likely safe to not interrupt anticoagulation (as is done in warfarin-treated patients) but data to support such a practice are lacking.
Patients with Impaired Renal Function:
An approach to managing patients with mild-to-moderate renal dysfunction is shown in Table 1, but for patients with severe renal dysfunction (CrCl <30 mL/min) who are generally ineligible for NOACs, peri-operative management is unclear.

Need for Bridging in NOAC-treated Patients:
In general, the rapid offset and onset of action of NOACs obviates the need for ‘heparin bridging’ as is done in selected warfarin-treated patients.

Pediatrics:
There are no studies evaluating the use of NOACs in children, although studies are underway. NOACs in children are not recommended until dosing, safety and efficacy are confirmed.

Other Relevant Thrombosis Canada Clinical Guides:
- Apixaban (Eliquis®)
- Dabигатран (Pradaxa®)
- New/Novel Oral Anticoagulants (NOACs): Comparison and Frequently Asked Questions
- New/Novel Oral Anticoagulants (NOACs): Coagulation Tests
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)

References:


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Please note that the information contained herein is not to be interpreted as an alternative to medical advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you have any specific questions about any medical matter, you should consult your doctor or other professional healthcare providers, and as such you should never delay seeking medical advice, disregard medical advice or discontinue medical treatment because of the information contained herein.