

-----VA TAP – Technology Assessment WATCH – August, 2004-----

This E-mail newsletter is produced by the **VA Technology Assessment Program (VATAP)**. We produce evidence-based systematic reviews of the medical literature in response to requests for policy or clinical guidance sent through the Chief Patient Care Services Officer. **TECH WATCH** provides health technology assessment (HTA) reports & resources in VA with links to evidence-based resources from around the world:

---Acute Stroke Care--Recent Technology Assessment Evidence---

From VA TAP: A NEW REPORT--Evidence Reviews For Management Of Acute Ischemic Stroke: Thrombolytic Therapy And Organization Of Care.

VHA Clinical policy makers requested VA TAP to rapidly identify existing evidence reviews relevant to VHA's ischemic stroke management, specifically the use of thrombolysis and the organization of acute care. VHA's intent is that individual facilities have policies in place for swift evaluation of probable stroke patients by specialists.

http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/stroke_rpt.pdf

From VA: A New Stroke QUERI

The mission of VA HSR&D's new Stroke QUERI (Quality Enhancement Research Initiative) is to reduce stroke risk and maximize veterans' functional status and quality of life by systematically implementing clinical research findings and evidence based guidelines into routine clinical practice. Four goals will emphasize: guidelines, rehabilitation, anticoagulation, and post stroke depression. To see more about these goals visit their web site: <http://www1.va.gov/stroke-queri/>

Evidence-Based WEB Information Resources on Acute Stroke Care

Stroke services have improved but remain overstretched

Stroke management policy is on the minds of many health care systems around the world. This week's British Medical Journal addresses the same issue in Britain where a recent annual survey indicates that stroke care has improved considerably but capacity remains inadequate to meet all stroke patients' needs.

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/329/7464/476-a?etoc>

The Cochrane Collaboration HAS VERY STRICT STANDARDS & GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH INFORMATION EVIDENCE AND DISSEMINATION. IN A RECENT UPDATE TO THEIR DATABASE OF CONTROLLED CLINICAL TRIALS, TAP FOUND 2 ARTICLES AND A HTA REPORT ON STROKE THROMBOLYSIS:

Alexandrov, AV, Demchuk, AM, Burgin, WS, Robinson, DJ, Grotta, JC. Ultrasound-enhanced thrombolysis for acute ischemic stroke: phase I. Findings of the CLOTBUST trial. **Journal of Neuroimaging 2004;14(2):113-7.** Tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) activity may be enhanced with ultrasound, potentially 2 MHz transcranial Doppler (TCD). The authors present Phase I data of the CLOTBUST (Combined Lysis of Thrombus in Brain ischemia using transcranial Ultrasound and Systemic TPA).

Alexandrov, AV, Wojner, AW, Grotta, JC. CLOTBUST: design of a randomized trial of ultrasound-enhanced thrombolysis for acute ischemic stroke. **Journal of Neuroimaging 2004;14(2):108-12.** Intravenous tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) therapy can be monitored with 2 MHz transcranial Doppler (TCD). This article describes the design of CLOTBUST trial (combined lysis of thrombus in brain ischemia using transcranial ultrasound and systemic TPA), the first prospective international multicenter randomized clinical trial of noninvasive externally applied ultrasound to enhance systemic thrombolysis in human stroke.

Law, M, Wald, N, Morris, J. (Department of Environmental and Preventive Medicine, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, St Bart's & The Royal London School of Medicine, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry). Lowering blood pressure to prevent myocardial infarction and stroke: a new preventive strategy. 2004. Report Number. http://www.nchta.org/ProjectData/3_project_record_published.asp?PjtId=880 Intravenous tissue plasminogen activator (TPA) therapy can be monitored with 2 MHz transcranial Doppler (TCD). This article describes the design of CLOTBUST trial (combined lysis of thrombus in brain ischemia using transcranial ultrasound and systemic TPA), the first prospective international multicenter randomized clinical trial of noninvasive externally applied ultrasound to enhance systemic thrombolysis in human stroke.

Emerging Technology on the Horizon for *Mechanically* Treating Acute Ischemic Strokes: A Corkscrew-Like Device To Clear Clots In Stroke Patients

A new device may hold promise for patients unsuitable for thrombolysis, the Merci Retriever, just approved by the FDA, appears to have treatment potential but has yet to be fully studied in 'gold standard' randomized clinical trials. It is a corkscrew-like device designed to remove blood clots from the brains of stroke patients before they suffer paralysis or other major brain damage. The device snakes a catheter inserted in the groin through an artery up to the brain. Then, a nickel and titanium alloy coil grabs hold of the clot, and the device drags the clot out of the patient's body. The device is the first mechanical treatment approved by FDA to restore blood flow to the brain.

<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=11543>

The FDA Device Review:

http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/04/briefing/4022b1_FDA%20Device%20Review.htm

WEB Resources Worth Checking Out:

There's more to web search engines than GOOGLE -- for your next web search check these out --

<http://www.alltheweb.com>

<http://www.vivisimo.com>

<http://vivisimo.com/clustermed>

VA TAP produces evidence-based systematic reviews of the medical literature in response to requests for policy or clinical guidance sent through the Chief Officer of Patient Care Services. Our reports address the use of health care technologies (such as any device, process, drug, or therapeutic intervention) in the veteran population. For more information & access to all our publications, plus links to HTA resources around the world, check out the

VA TAP websites: <http://www.va.gov/vatap> <http://vaww.va.gov/vatap>

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