

Prevalence of Asymptomatic Atrial Fibrillation in Malaysian Patients with Hypertension

Wong Jin Shyan, MD, MRCP(UK)*, Rawa Bau, MD, MMed**, Fazlina Ahmad, MD*, MMed, Rosmadi Ismail, MD, MMed*, Alan Fong Yean Yip, MB ChB, MRCP***

Bintulu Hospital, Department of Medicine, Jalan Nyabau, Bintulu, Sarawak 97000, Malaysia, **, Klinik Kesihatan Bintulu, Bintulu, Sarawak, ***Department of Cardiology, and Clinical Research Centre, Sarawak General Hospital, Kuching,

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SUMMARY

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is usually asymptomatic and often associated with established cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension. The prevalence atrial fibrillation in patients admitted to Malaysian hospitals has been determined, but asymptomatic atrial fibrillation (AAF) in hypertensive patients in the primary care setting is not established. This study reports the prevalence of AAF in hypertensive patients in Malaysia, in a primary care setting. The overall prevalence of AAF was 0.75% with no differences between the gender. The prevalence of AAF increases with age – in the age groups of 30-39, >40-49, >50-59, >60-69, 70-79 and >80 years old were 0%, 0.17%, 0.35%, 2.32%, 2.59%, and 0% respectively. Hypertensive patients with age of ≥ 61 year old were associated with a probability of 10.6 times higher for AAF. We suggest the age threshold to screen for AAF to be age of 60. It is estimated that there are 49,029 Malaysians with AAF in 2010. A large population is at risk of AAF-related complications. There is justification for an even greater emphasis on diagnostic, primary and secondary prevention strategies.

KeY WoRdS:

Atrial fibrillation, primary care, prevalence, Malaysia