



Pillars of Atrial Fibrillation Management

Shared Decision Making

Stroke Risk

- Assess risk with CHA₂DS₂-VASc score:
 - ≥2%/yr → anticoagulation recommended¹
 - 1-2%/yr → anticoagulation reasonable¹
- Anticoagulants:
 - DOACs over warfarin, unless mitral stenosis or mechanical heart valve¹
 - DO NOT use aspirin ± clopidogrel with stroke risk (HARM) or without risk (NO BENEFIT)¹
- Only consider atrial appendage device/ligation if history of major bleeding²

Optimize Risk Factors

- Modifiable
 - Obesity
 - Exercise
 - Obstructive Sleep Apnea
 - Hyperlipidemia
 - Hypertension
 - Tobacco
 - Alcohol
 - Diabetes
- Non-modifiable
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Family History
 - Race
 - Height

Symptom Management

- Pharmacological rate control:
 - EF>40% → beta blockers or NDCC¹
 - EF≤40% → beta blockers ONLY¹
- Pharmacological rhythm control:
 - Many classic antiarrhythmics³
 - Consider structural diseases (CAD or HF) when choosing³
- Indications for catheter ablation:
 - Drug therapy ineffective, contraindicated, or not tolerated¹ OR
 - Generally younger with fewer comorbidities¹ OR
 - Symptomatic or significant atrial flutter¹

Lifestyle Changes and Pharmacological Management of Modifiable Risk Factors¹

Obesity

- >10% weight loss
- Target BMI <27
- Avoid fluctuations

Exercise

- 30 min, 3-4x weekly
- Increase up to 250 total min weekly

Obstructive Sleep Apnea

- AHI ≥30 OR ≥20 + resistant HTN OR daytime somnolence, CPAP therapy

Hyperlipidemia

- Lifestyle intervention x3 months
- If LDL >100, start statin
- If TG >200, add fibrate

Hypertension

- Home diary 2-3x daily
- Reduce salt
- Start ACEI or ARB
- Target <130/80

Tobacco

- Complete cessation
- Consider assistance programs or medications

Alcohol

- Complete abstinence preferred
- At least reduce <30 g weekly

Diabetes

- Lifestyle intervention x3 months
- If HbA1C >6.5%, start metformin
- Diabetes management clinic

Bibliography

1. Joglar JA, Chung MK, Armbruster AL, et al. 2023 ACC/AHA/ACCP/HRS guideline for the diagnosis and management of atrial fibrillation: A report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on clinical practice guidelines. Circulation [Internet] 2023;149(1). Available from: <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001193>

2. January CT, Wann LS, Calkins H, et al. 2019 AHA/ACC/HRS focused update of the 2014 AHA/ACC/HRS guideline for the management of patients with atrial fibrillation. Journal of the American College of Cardiology [Internet] 2019;74(1). Available from: <http://www.onlinejacc.org/content/early/2019/01/21/j.jacc.2019.01.011>

3. January CT, Wann LS, Alpert JS, et al. 2014 AHA/ACC/HRS Guideline for the Management of Patients With Atrial Fibrillation. Circulation [Internet] 2014;130(23). Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676081/>