

Direct Oral Anticoagulants in Chronic Liver Disease: Stirring the Clotroversy

A Presentation for HealthTrust Members
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Objectives

1

Recall the pathophysiology of chronic liver disease and its relationship to both elevated risk of thromboembolic events and bleeding.

2

Identify the pharmacokinetics of key direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) and their relation to the effects of chronic liver disease.

3

Recognize which subgroups of patients with chronic liver disease have data for the safe and efficacious use of direct oral anticoagulants in thromboembolic conditions.

Chronic Liver Disease (CLD)

Deterioration of liver function for >6 months

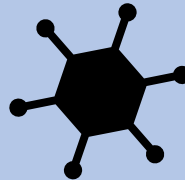
Etiology



Alcoholic Liver
Disease



Non-alcoholic
liver disease



Chronic Viral
Hepatitis



Genetic



Autoimmune

Cause is not addressed → continued death of hepatocytes → hepatic fibrosis → cirrhosis

Epidemiology

2018 Centers for Disease Control Health Statistics

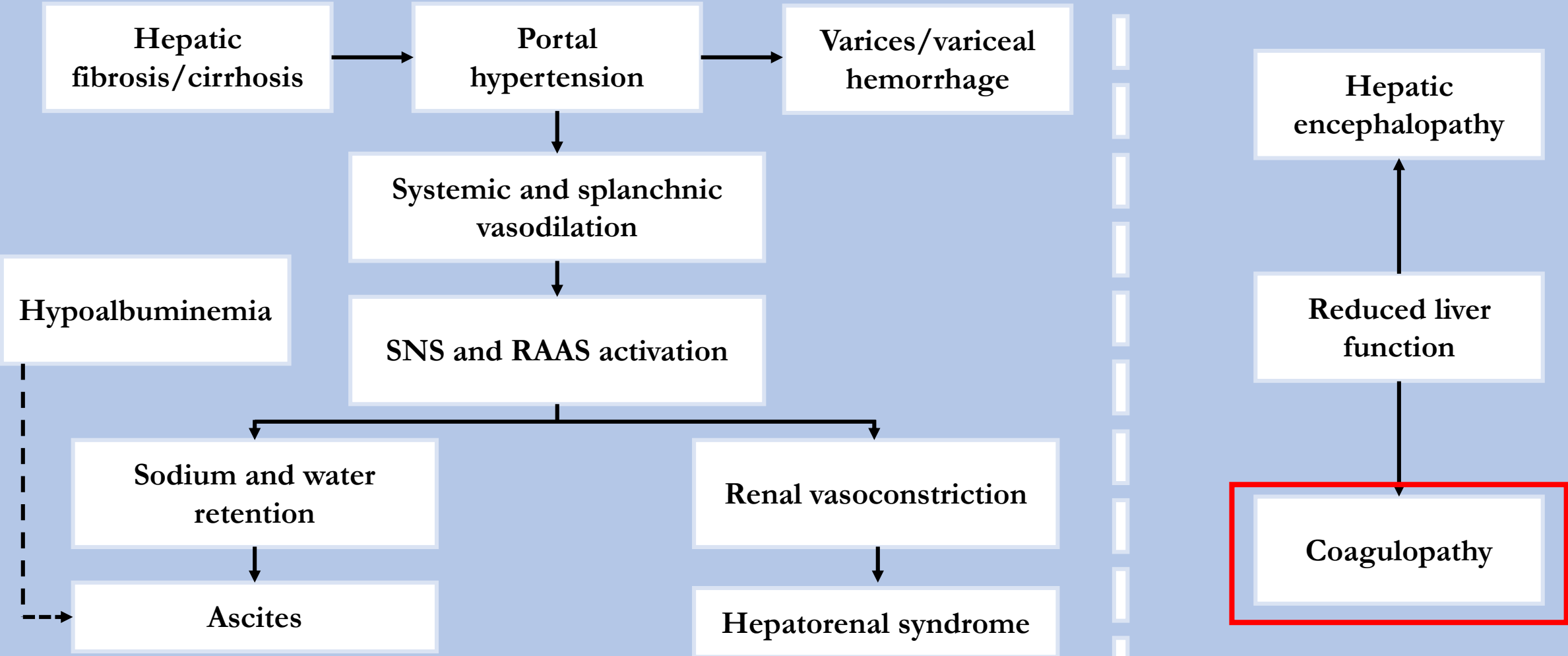
4.5 million adults diagnosed with liver disease
(1.8% of the population)

Associated with >56,000 deaths/year
(9th leading cause of death in the U.S.)

Mean increase of ~\$9,500/year for every patient with chronic liver disease



Complications of CLD



Sources: DiPiro's Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 12th Edition. McGraw Hill; 2023.
Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2023 Jul;21(8):2110-2123.

SNS: sympathetic nervous system
RAAS: renin angiotensin aldosterone system

Coagulopathy of CLD

Hemostasis Overview

1

Endothelial injury

2

Platelet plug

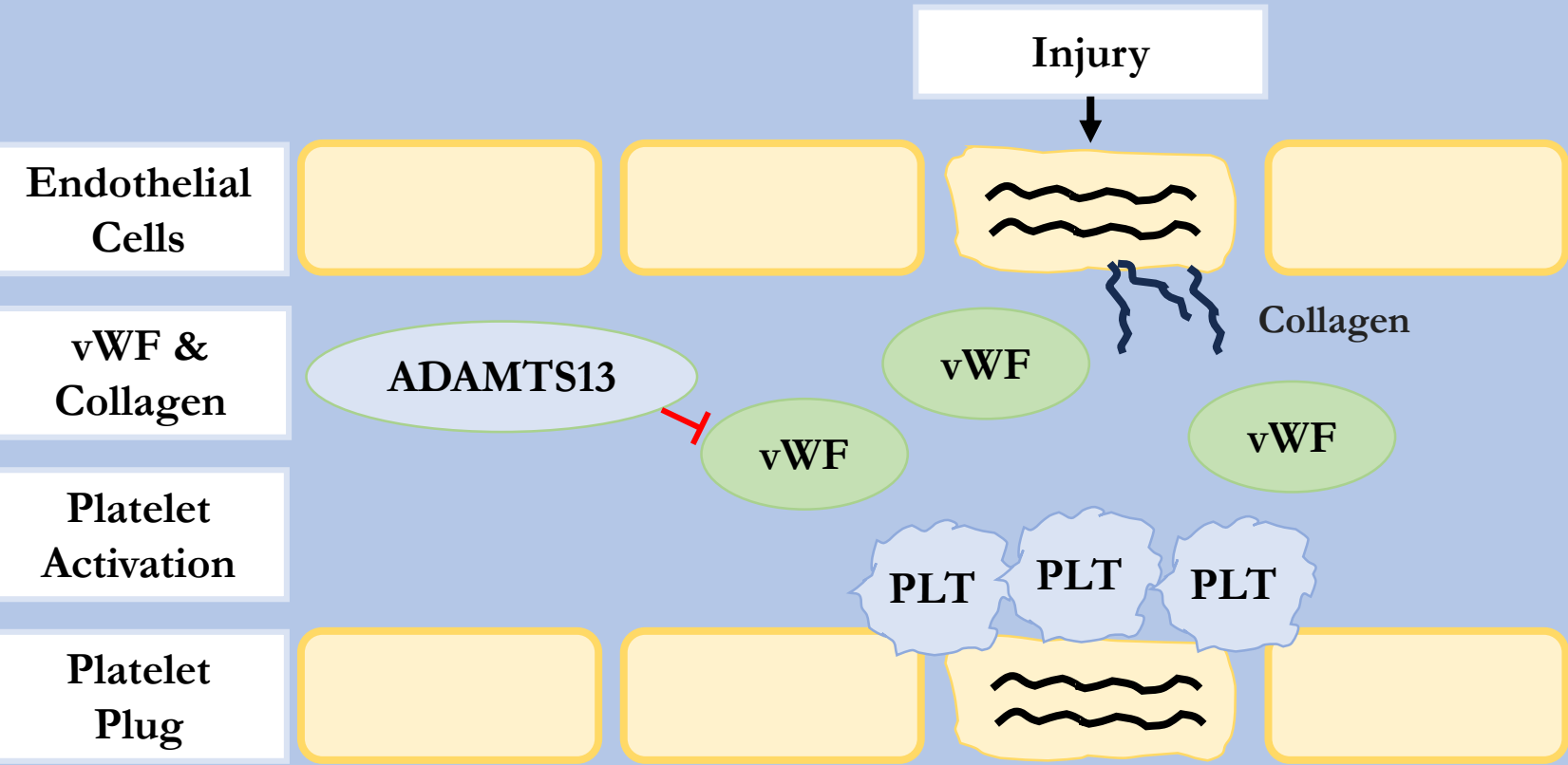
3

Coagulation cascade

4

Fibrinolysis

Endothelial Injury → Platelet Plug



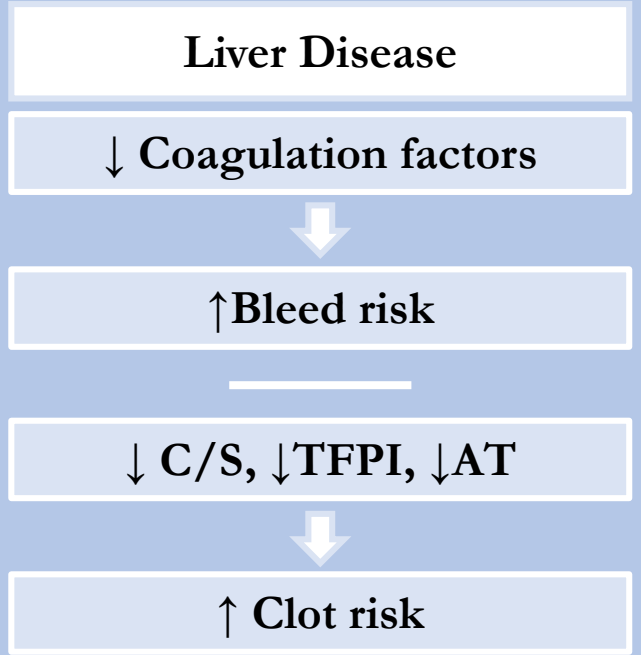
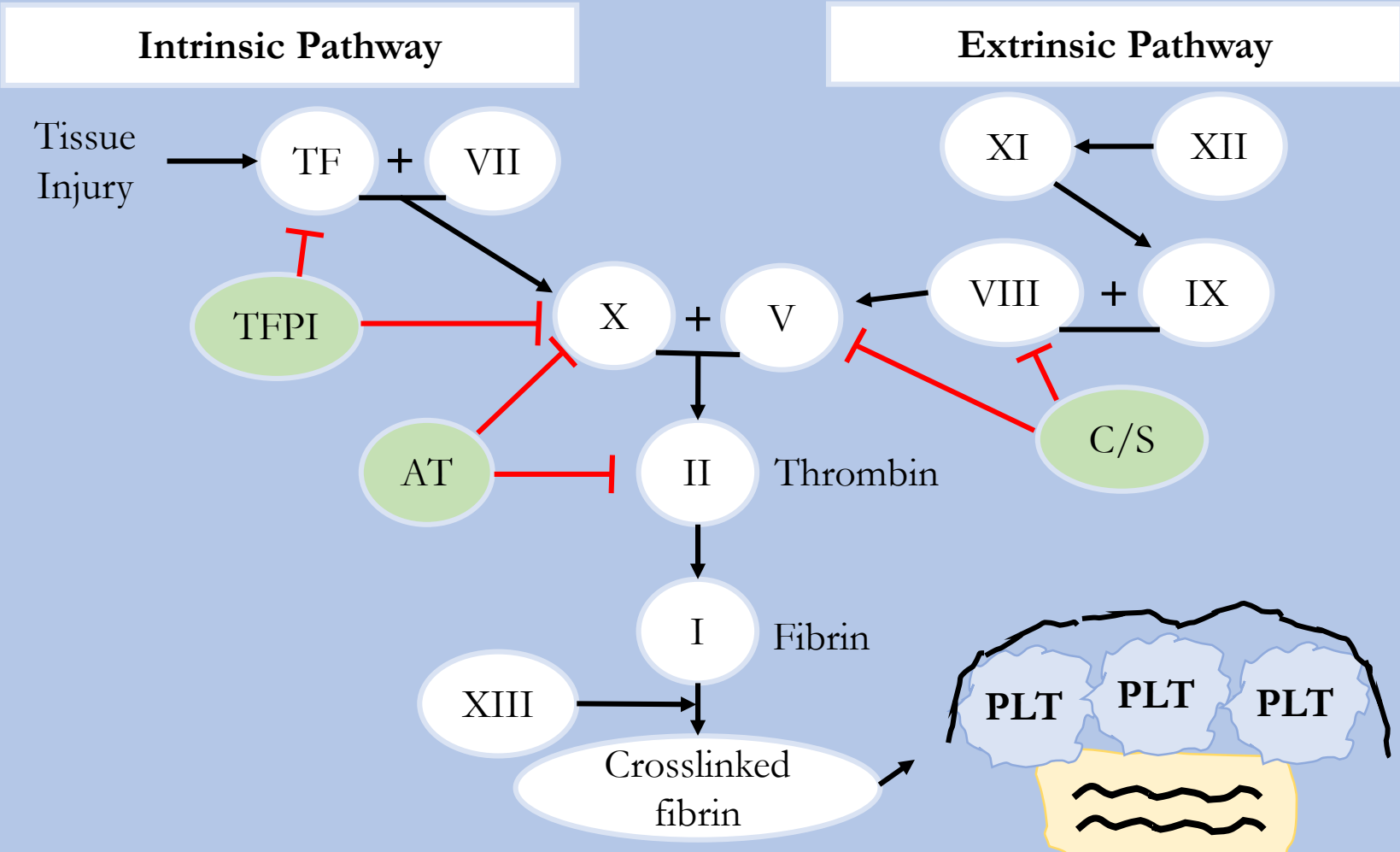
The flowchart on the right details the clinical consequences of liver disease:

- Liver Disease** (white box)
- ↓ **Platelets** (light blue box)
- ↑ **Nitric oxide** → **PLT dysfunction** (light blue box)
- ↓ (white arrow)
- ↑ **Bleed risk** (light blue box)
- (white horizontal line)
- Chronic inflammation** (light blue box)
- ↑ **vWF** / ↓ **ADAMTS13** (light blue box)
- ↓ (white arrow)
- ↑ **Clot risk** (light blue box)

Sources: DiPiro's Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 12th Edition. McGraw Hill; 2023.
 Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2023 Jul;21(8):2110-2123.

vWF: Von Willebrand Factor
 PLT: platelet

Coagulation Cascade

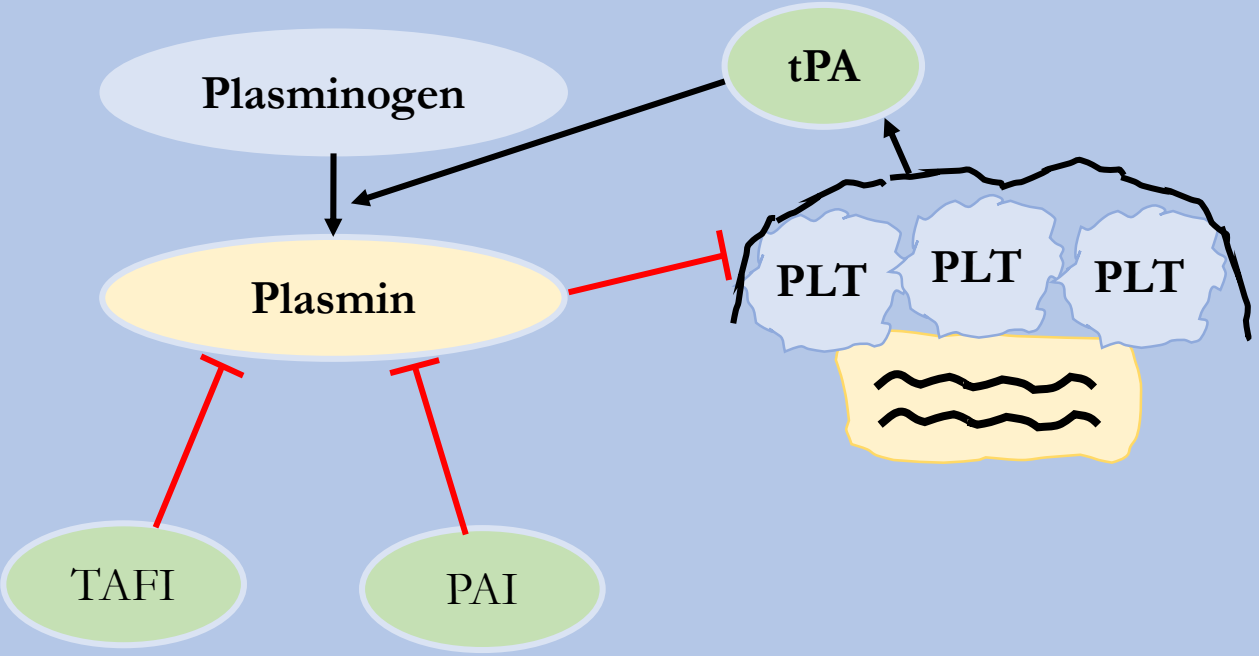


C/S: protein C/S
 AT: antithrombin
 TFPI: tissue factor pathway inhibitor
 INR: international normalized ratio
 aPTT: activated partial thromboplastin time

Sources: DiPiro's Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 12th Edition. McGraw Hill; 2023.
 Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2023 Jul;21(8):2110-2123.

Fibrinolysis

Fibrin Breakdown



Liver Disease

↓ TAFI/PAI

↑ tPA

↑ Bleed risk

↓ Plasminogen

↑ Clot risk

tPA: tissue plasminogen activator
TAFI: Thrombin-activatable fibrinolysis inhibitor
PAI: plasminogen activator inhibitor

Sources: DiPiro's Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach, 12th Edition. McGraw Hill; 2023.
Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2023 Jul;21(8):2110-2123.

Pathophysiology Takeaway

	Thrombosis Risk	Bleed Risk
Platelets	↑ vWF/↓ ADAMTS13 activity	↓ Platelets/function
Coagulation	↓ Endogenous anticoagulants	↓ Coagulation factors
Fibrinolysis	↓ Plasminogen	↑ tPA activity

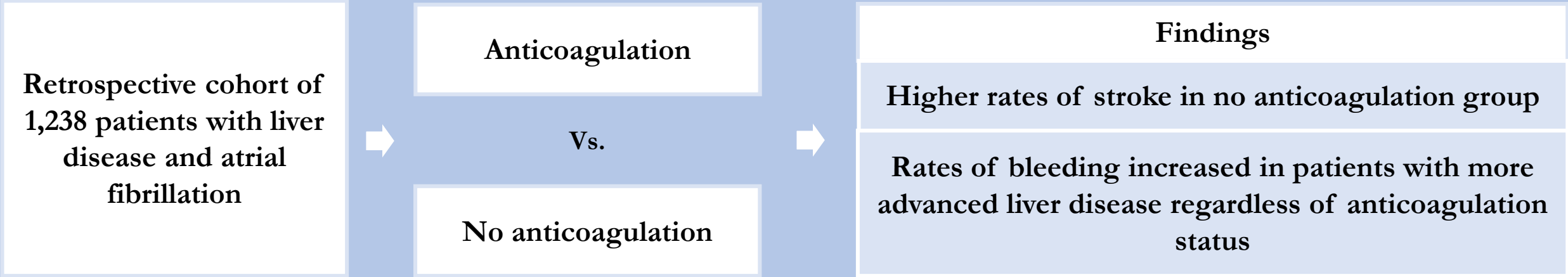
Individualized Risk

Thromboembolic risk



Bleed risk

Clinical Evidence of Clot vs. Bleed



Source: J Am Coll Cardiol. 2018 May, 71 (19) 2162–2175
Clin Res Hepatol Gastroenterol. 2022 Oct;46(8):101952.

Assessment Question #1

TRUE or FALSE. JJ is a 55-year-old male with HTN, atrial fibrillation, cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B), and alcoholism. His INR is found to be 2.1. He is at an elevated bleed risk but not an elevated clot risk.

Assessment Question #1: Correct Response

TRUE or FALSE. JJ is a 55-year-old male with HTN, atrial fibrillation, cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B), and alcoholism. His INR is found to be 2.1. He is at an elevated bleed risk but not an elevated clot risk.

FALSE

Assessment Question #2

Which of the following statements are true regarding the pathophysiology of coagulopathy in chronic liver disease?

- a. vWF production is decreased resulting in decreased platelet plug formation
- b. Chronic inflammation leads to decreased production of ADAMTS13 increasing clot risk
- c. Protein C/S production is decreased resulting in an decreased clot risk
- d. Platelets are dysfunctional causing an increased propensity for platelet plug formation

Assessment Question #2: Correct Response

Which of the following statements are true regarding the pathophysiology of coagulopathy in chronic liver disease?

- a. vWF production is decreased resulting in decreased platelet plug formation
- b. Chronic inflammation leads to decreased production of ADAMTS13 increasing clot risk**
- c. Protein C/S production is decreased resulting in an decreased clot risk
- d. Platelets are dysfunctional causing an increased propensity for platelet plug formation

Anticoagulation in Chronic Liver Disease

Anticoagulation Options

Warfarin

**Low molecular weight
heparin (LMWH)**

DOACs

Warfarin

Mechanism of Action

Inhibits vitamin K epoxide reductase which reduces the formation of coagulation factors II, VII, IX, and X in addition to protein C/S

Advantages

Can be monitored

Longer half-life

Clinical and operational challenges

Monitoring

Adherence

Limited data in chronic liver disease

Drug-drug interactions

INR goal

LMWH

Mechanism of Action

Enhances activity of antithrombin III increasing rate of proteolysis of coagulation factors Xa and IIa

Advantages

Consistent dose-response curve

Shorter half-life

Quick onset

Clinical and operational challenges

Injection

Dosing

Limited data in chronic liver disease

Anticoagulation Options

Warfarin

LMWH

DOACs

DOACs

Mechanism of Action

- **Apixaban, edoxaban, rivaroxaban:** binds to and inhibits factor Xa
- **Dabigatran:** binds to and inhibits thrombin

Advantages

Monitoring not required

Shorter half-life

Quick onset

Clinical and operational challenges

Lack of data in chronic liver disease

Expensive

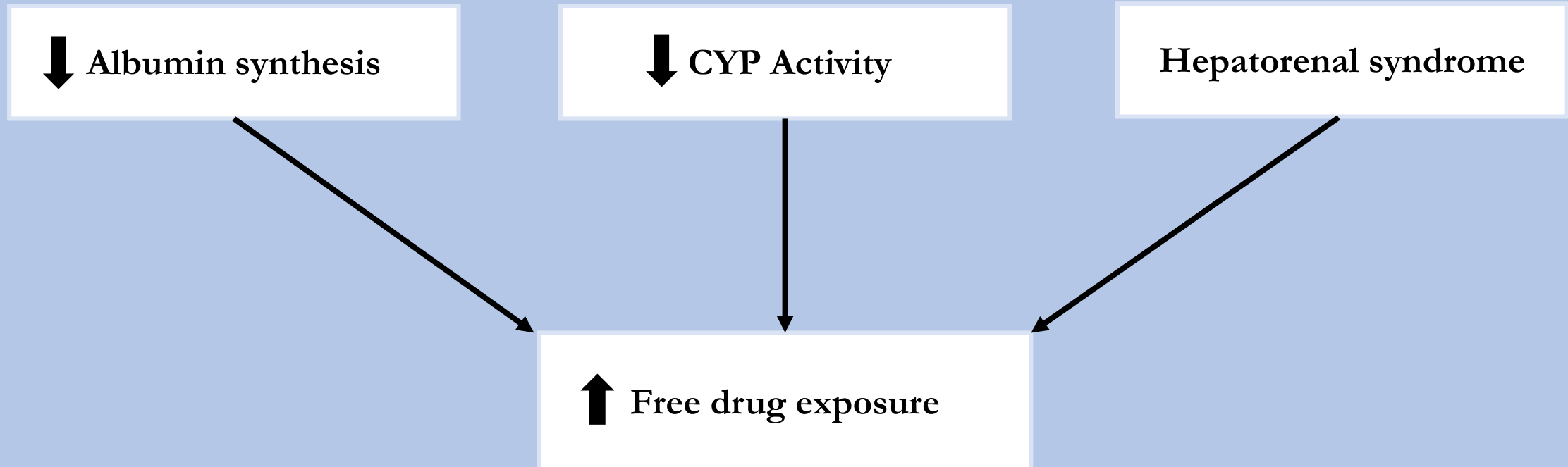
Harder to monitor if desired

DOAC Landmark Studies

Trial	DOAC	Exclusion
ROCKET AF	Rivaroxaban	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acute or chronic hepatitis▪ Cirrhosis▪ ALT > 3x upper limit of normal (ULN)
ARISTOTLE	Apixaban	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ AST or ALT 2x ULN▪ Total bilirubin > 1.5x ULN
RE-LY	Dabigatran	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Persistently high levels of ALT or AST▪ Presence of hepatitis A, B, or C
ENGAGE AF-TIMI	Edoxaban	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ALT or AST >2x ULN▪ Total bilirubin > 1.5x ULN

DOAC Pharmacokinetics and Hepatic Clearance

Liver Disease Effects on Pharmacokinetics



Direct Oral Anticoagulants

Drug	Apixaban	Dabigatran	Edoxaban	Rivaroxaban
Prodrug	No	Yes	No	No
Renal	25%	80%	50%	35%
Hepatic	75%	20%	50%	65%
CYP	Significant	Minimal	Minimal	Significant
PPB	87%	35%	55%	95%

Child-Pugh Classification

	+1	+2	+3	
Encephalopathy	None	Moderate	Severe	Group A: Mild 5-6 Group B: Moderate 7-9 Group C: Severe 10-15
Ascites	None	Slight	Moderate	
Bilirubin (mg/dL)	<2	2.1-3	>3	
Albumin (g/dL)	<2.8	2.8-3.5	>3.5	
Prothrombin time (seconds > control)	0-3.9	4-6	>6	

Source: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan-.

Assessment Question #3

Which DOAC has the highest percentage clearance by the liver?

- a. Apixaban
- b. Rivaroxaban
- c. Dabigatran
- d. Edoxaban

Assessment Question #3: Correct Response

Which DOAC has the highest percentage clearance by the liver?

- a. Apixaban
- b. Rivaroxaban
- c. Dabigatran
- d. Edoxaban

Assessment Question #4

Based on the presented pharmacokinetics, which DOAC would be expected to be least affected by chronic liver disease

- a. Apixaban
- b. Rivaroxaban
- c. Dabigatran
- d. Edoxaban

Assessment Question #4: Correct Response

Based on the presented pharmacokinetics, which DOAC would be expected to be least affected by chronic liver disease

- a. Apixaban
- b. Rivaroxaban
- c. Dabigatran**
- d. Edoxaban

Use of DOACs in Chronic Liver Disease

Meta-analysis

Direct Oral Anticoagulants versus Warfarin in
Patients with Atrial Fibrillation and Liver
Disease

Methods

Abided by PRISMA guidelines

Patients

- Liver disease with concomitant nonvalvular atrial fibrillation
- Receiving warfarin or DOAC

Outcomes

- Efficacy: ischemic stroke/systemic embolism
- Safety: all-cause mortality, major bleeding*, intracranial hemorrhage, major GI bleed

*inconsistent definitions of GI bleeds between studies

Study types

- Post-hoc analyses of randomized controlled trials, retrospective or prospective studies

Meta-analysis: DOACs vs. Warfarin

Results

6 studies of 41,954 patients

4 retrospective cohorts

1 prospective cohort

1 post-hoc analysis

Liver disease definition

- 4 based off ICD codes
- 2 based off AST/ALT elevations (>2x ULN)

Locations

- United States: 1
- Italy: 1
- East Asia: 3
- International: 1

Meta-analysis: DOACs vs. Warfarin

Primary Analysis

Outcome	RR (95% CI)	I ²	Risk Ratio
Ischemic stroke/systemic embolism	0.80 (0.57 to 1.12)	71%	
All-cause mortality	0.78 (0.66 to 0.83)	73%	
Major bleeding	0.68 (0.53 to 0.88)	38%	
Intracranial hemorrhage	0.49 (0.41 to 0.59)	0%	
GI bleed	0.90 (0.61 to 1.34)	61%	

*inconsistent between studies

Favors 1 Favors
DOACs Warfarin

Meta-analysis: Conclusion

Author's Conclusion

Bases upon current observations, the use of DOACs is at least non-inferior to warfarin in patients with atrial fibrillation and chronic liver disease

Limitations

Definition of chronic liver disease

Majority East Asian patients

Time in therapeutic range not charted in 5 studies

Mostly observational studies

Retrospective Cohort

Comparative Effectiveness and Safety of
DOACs and Warfarin in Patients With Atrial
Fibrillation and Chronic Liver Disease: A
Nationwide Cohort Study

Methods

Study type

- Retrospective cohort of a large US-based administrative database

Inclusion

- Chronic liver disease with concomitant atrial fibrillation
- Patients ≥ 18 years of age
- Warfarin or DOAC

Exclusion

- Stroke, embolism, or major bleeding within 4 weeks of initial anticoagulant
- Patients with valvular atrial fibrillation
- Alternative indications for anticoagulation besides atrial fibrillation

Outcomes

- Efficacy: ischemic stroke/systemic embolism
- Safety: major bleeding, major GI bleed, all-cause mortality





Results

10,209 patients included	
Warfarin	4,421
Apixaban	2,721
Rivaroxaban	2,211
Dabigatran	851
Edoxaban	5

Baseline characteristic	DOACs (N=5,788)	Warfarin (N=4,421)
Mean age\pmSD, y	70.3 \pm 10.6	72.2 \pm 10
NAFLD/NASH, n (%)	1942 (33.6)	1188 (26.9)
Alcoholic liver disease, n (%)	640 (11.1)	595 (13.5)
Viral hepatitis, n (%)	689 (11.9)	428 (9.7)
Cirrhosis, n (%)	1399 (24.2)	1541 (34.9)
Chronic kidney disease, n (%)	1429 (24.7)	1389 (31.4)
Mean HAS-BLED, \pmSD	4.0 \pm 1.3	4.2 \pm 1.2
Mean CHA₂DS₂-VASc, \pmSD	3.9 \pm 1.8	4.3 \pm 1.8

Results

Primary Analysis

Outcome, n (%)	DOACs (N=5,788)	Warfarin (N=4,421)	IPTW HR (95% CI)	Hazard Ratio	
Stroke/embolism	74 (1.3)	115 (2.6)	0.64 (0.46–0.90)		
All-cause mortality	503 (8.7)	702 (1.6)	0.76 (0.67–0.87)		
Major bleeding	263 (4.5)	383 (8.7)	0.69 (0.58–0.82)		
GI bleed	179 (3.1)	248 (5.6)	0.73 (0.59–0.91)		

Outcome, n (%)	Apixaban (N=2,721)	Rivaroxaban (N=2,211)	IPTW HR (95% CI)	Favors DOACs	1	Favors Warfarin
Major bleeding	98 (3.6)	119 (5.4)	1.59 (1.18–2.14)			
GI bleed	60 (2.2)	86 (3.9)	2.12 (1.52–2.98)			

Conclusion

Author's Conclusion

Among patients with AF and chronic liver disease, DOACs as a class were associated with lower risks of hospitalization for ischemic stroke/systemic embolism and major bleeding versus warfarin

The incidence of clinical outcomes varied between individual DOACs

Limitations

ICD claim codes for outcome measures

Unable to collect Child-Pugh scores

Retrospective cohort

Unable to measure TTR

Chronic Liver Disease Summary

DOACs appear to be at least as effective and safe as warfarin

Cause of CLD does not appear to affect clinical outcomes with DOACs

Data is limited to retrospective cohorts

DOACs appear to be a reasonable option for anticoagulation in patients with chronic liver disease

Does severity of liver disease affect outcomes with DOACs?

Use of DOACs in Cirrhosis

Meta-analysis

Direct Oral Anticoagulants versus Warfarin in
Cirrhotic Patients with Atrial Fibrillation

Methods

Abided by PRISMA guidelines

Patients

- Liver cirrhosis with concomitant atrial fibrillation
- Receiving warfarin or DOAC

Outcomes

- Efficacy: ischemic stroke/systemic embolism
- Safety: all-cause mortality, major bleeding, intracranial hemorrhage, major GI bleed

Study types

- Randomized controlled trials, retrospective or prospective studies

Meta-analysis: DOACs vs. Warfarin

Results

7 studies of 7,551 patients

6 retrospective

1 prospective

0 RCTs

Child-Pugh Classification

- Charted in 3 studies
- Majority class A/B
- 21 patients class C

DOAC

- Charted in 5 studies
- Apixaban: 220 patients
- Rivaroxaban: 810 patients
- Dabigatran: 587 patients

Meta-analysis: DOACs vs. Warfarin

Primary Analysis

Outcome	HR (95% CI)	P-value	I ²
Ischemic stroke/systemic embolism	0.79 (0.59 to 1.06)	0.12	0%
All-cause mortality	0.94 (0.69 to 1.28)	0.07	63%
Major bleeding*	0.61 (0.5 to 0.75)	<0.00001	38%
Intracranial hemorrhage	0.55 (0.31 to 0.98)	0.04	0%
Major GI bleed	0.66 (0.51 to 0.85)	0.001	0%

*inconsistent between studies

Subgroup Analysis: Advanced Cirrhosis

Outcome	HR (95% CI)	P-value	I ²
Ischemic stroke/systemic embolism	1.38 (0.75 to 2.55)	0.31	0%
Major bleeding*	0.59 (0.39 to 0.89)	0.01	0%
Major GI bleed	0.65 (0.41 to 1.04)	0.08	0%

Meta-analysis: Conclusion

Author's Conclusion

DOACs are associated with more favorable safety outcomes when compared to warfarin in patients with liver cirrhosis and concomitant atrial fibrillation. Randomized, prospective studies are needed to validate these observations

Limitations

Majority of data came from 2 studies (5,368/7,551 patients)

DOAC use not consistently charted

Majority of patients has uncharted Child-Pugh classification

Lawal et al and Lee et al

	Lawal et al	Lee et al
Study type & population	Retrospective cohort of AF and CLD patients	Retrospective cohort of AF and CLD patients
Methods	Identified diagnoses via administrative claims	Identified diagnoses via administrative claims
Intervention	DOACs vs. Warfarin	DOACs vs. Warfarin
Subgroup	Advanced liver cirrhosis defined as decompensated claim	Advanced liver cirrhosis defined as claim for ascites, HE, SBP, or varices
Conclusion	DOACs > warfarin for embolism and major bleeds	DOACs = warfarin for embolism DOACs > warfarin for major bleeds
	Both studies unable to collect Child-Pugh classification	

Sources: Circulation. 2023 Mar 7;147(10):782-794.
J Am Coll Cardiol. 2019 Jul, 73 (25) 3295–3308.

AF: atrial fibrillation
CLD: chronic liver disease

HE: hepatic encephalopathy
SBP: spontaneous bacterial peritonitis

**Does cirrhosis severity affect clinical
outcomes with DOACs?**

Retrospective Studies of Child-Pugh Scores

Author	Indication	Anticoagulant	DOAC CTP-Class, n (%)	Other AC CTP-Class, n (%)	Efficacy	Safety
Oldham, et al	AF, VTE	DOAC: 69 Warfarin/LMWH: 32	A: 10 (14.5) B: 59 (85.5) C: 0	A: 2 (6.3) B: 30 (93.7) C: 0	-	Bleeding: similar
Yoo, et al	AF	DOAC: 128 Warfarin: 110	A: 100 (78.1) B: 28 (21.9)	79 (71.8) 31 (28.2)	-	MB: similar
Coons, et al	AF, VTE	DOAC: 44 Warfarin: 41	A: 12 (27.3) B: 24 (54.5) C: 8 (18.2)	A: 5 (12.2) B: 27 (65.9) C: 9 (21.9)	Failed efficacy: similar	Major bleeding: similar
Serper, et al	AF	DOAC: 201 Warfarin: 614	A: 429 (69.9) B: 181 (29.5) C: 4 (0.65)	A: 184 (91.5) B: 17 (8.5) C: 0	-	Bleeding: favored DOACs
Jones, et al	AF, VTE	DOAC: 42 Warfarin: 37	A: 34 (81) B: 8 (19.1) C: 0	A: 16 (43.2) B: 19 (51.4) C: 2 (5.4)	Failed efficacy: similar	Bleeding: similar

**Does the choice of DOAC affect outcomes
in cirrhosis?**

Current Guideline Recommendations

	Child-Pugh A	Child-Pugh B	Child-Pugh C
Apixaban	Recommended	Caution	Contraindicated
Dabigatran	Recommended	Caution	Contraindicated
Edoxaban	Recommended	Caution	Contraindicated
Rivaroxaban	Recommended	Contraindicated	

Source: Circulation. 2024 Jan 2;149(1):e1-e156.

Rivaroxaban Pharmacokinetic Data

Effect of hepatic impairment on the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of a single dose of rivaroxaban, an oral, direct Factor Xa inhibitor

32 subjects enrolled

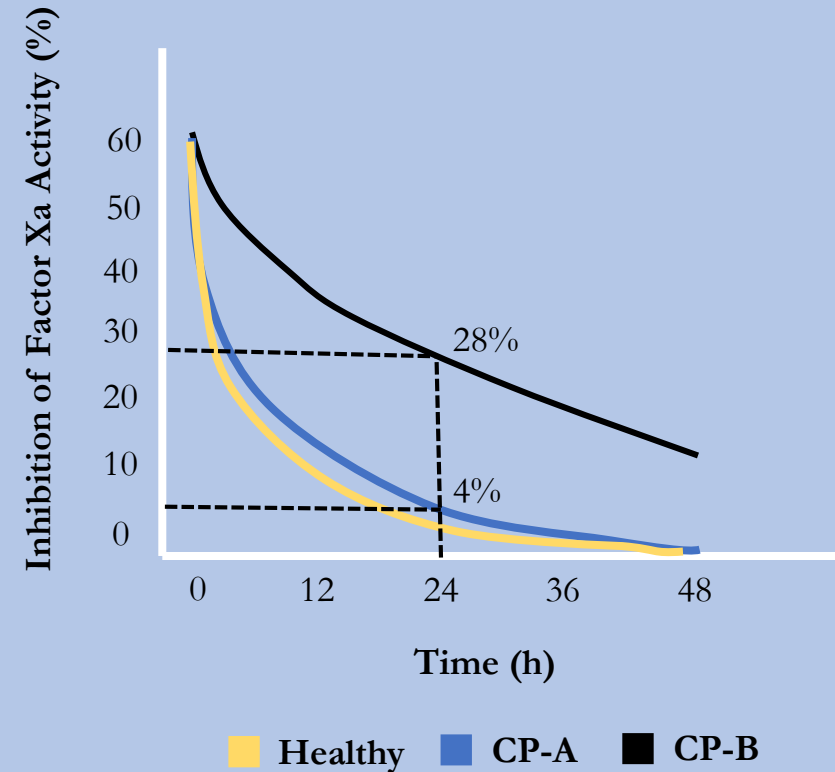
16 healthy

8 CP-A

8 CP-B

Single 10 mg dose administered to all subjects

Anti-Xa activity monitored for 48 hours



Apixaban Pharmacokinetic Data

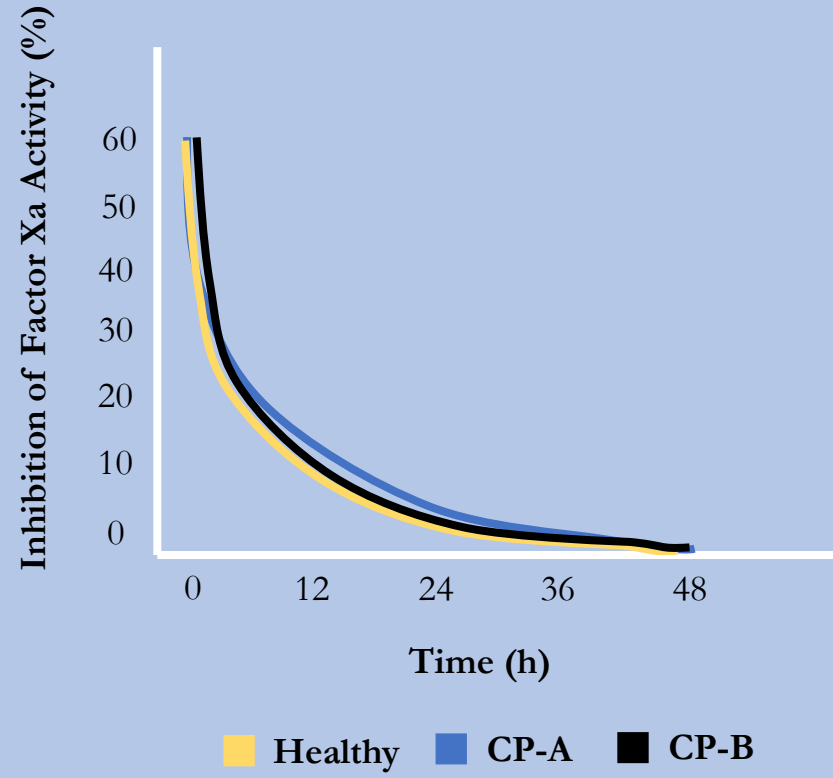
Apixaban

32 subjects enrolled

16 healthy 8 CP-A 8 CP-B

Single 5 mg dose administered to all subjects

Anti-Xa activity monitored for 48 hours



Dabigatran and Edoxaban

Dabigatran

150 mg one time dose

16 healthy

12 CP-B

No statistically significant difference in plasma concentrations

Edoxaban

15 mg one time dose

16 healthy

8 CP-A

9 CP-B

No statistically significant difference in plasma concentrations

**Should patients with Child-Pugh C
cirrhosis and atrial fibrillation be
anticoagulated at all?**

Child-Pugh C

Associated with >50% mortality risk at 1 year

Lee, et al

- Patients with cirrhosis and atrial fibrillation
- Rate of stroke (warfarin vs. No warfarin): 1.8% vs. 4.7% (P=0.01)
- Annualized rate of major bleeding of Child-Pugh A vs. B/C: 4.9% vs. 14.5% (p<0.001)
- Less benefit of stroke reduction noticed in patients with Child-Pugh C cirrhosis

Several other observational studies have contradicting results that suggest benefit of anticoagulation in patients with Child-Pugh C

Individualized risk

Venous thromboembolism

Bleed risk (HAS-BLED)

CHA₂DS₂VASc

Overall Conclusion

DOACs appear to be associated with more favorable safety outcomes when compared to warfarin in patients with chronic liver disease

Data is limited in more advanced liver disease, especially Child-Pugh C classified cirrhosis

If anticoagulation is pursued in patients with chronic liver disease or cirrhosis, DOACs should be limited to Child-Pugh classification A and B

Assessment Question #5

Which patient would most likely benefit from anticoagulation with a DOAC?

- a. A 55-year-old female with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B) and a deep vein thrombosis offered rivaroxaban
- b. A 75-year-old male with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B), Afib (CHA₂DS₂-VASc: 5), and peptic ulcer disease offered apixaban
- c. A 45-year-old female with a pulmonary embolism, cirrhosis (Child-Pugh C), and a history of GI bleed (10 years ago) offered dabigatran
- d. A 54-year-old male with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh C), INR of 1.9, and a deep vein thrombosis offered apixaban

Assessment Question #5: Correct Response

Which patient would most likely benefit from anticoagulation with a DOAC?

- a. A 55-year-old female with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B) and a deep vein thrombosis offered rivaroxaban
- b. A 75-year-old male with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh B), Afib (CHA2DS2VASc: 5), and peptic ulcer disease offered apixaban**
- c. A 45-year-old female with a pulmonary embolism, cirrhosis (Child-Pugh C), and a history of GI bleed (10 years ago) offered dabigatran
- d. A 54-year-old male with cirrhosis (Child-Pugh C), INR of 1.9, and a deep vein thrombosis offered apixaban

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Thank you!



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