FACTOR Xa INHIBITORS AND VENOUS THROMBOSIS

Keerti Chakravarthy (1), Atul R. Laddu (1), Fakiha Siddiqui (2), Prakasha Kempaiah (2), Jawed Fareed (2) 1 = Global Thrombosis Forum, Suwanee, GA, 2 = Loyola University, Chicago, IL.

BACKGROUND

Factor Xa inhibitors (apixaban) hemostasis by directly and specifically inhibiting factor Xa through competitive inhibition. Andexanet alfa (AA) is the primary reversal agent for these agents, acting as a decoy. Ciraparantag, still in development, reverses a broader range of anticoagulants by directly binding them, including inhibitors of Factor Xa and thrombin. Clinicians in the past used pharmacologic blood factor products, such as 4-factor prothrombin complex concentrates (4F-PCC), activated PCC (e.g., FEIBA), and recombinant factor VII (NovoSeven), based on limited evidence from case reports and small studies.
This project is part of the research conducted by Keerti during the internship at Loyola University under the mentorship of Dr. Jawed Fareed.

METHODS

A retrospective, multi-hospital data review examined the management of major bleeding in 85 adults taking Factor Xa inhibitors between October 2018 and June 2020. Following the introduction of AA into hospital guidelines alongside 4F-PCC, the study aimed to evaluate the real-world efficacy and safety of both agents. Primary outcome (hemostatic efficacy), and the secondary outcome (thromboembolic events, blood product use, ICU and hospital length of stay, and in-hospital mortality) were outlined.

RESULTS

Effective hemostasis was achieved in 84.8% of AA patients and 76.9% of those receiving 4F-PCC, with no statistically significant difference. However, thrombotic events were more frequent in the AA group (18% vs. 3.8%). These findings suggest that while both agents are effective in managing bleeding, AA may carry a higher risk of thrombosis.

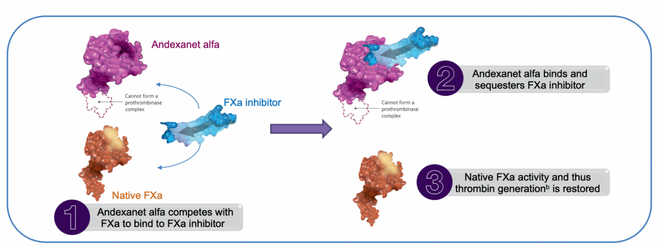

Figure 1: The process by which AA reverses Factor Xa Inhibitors

RESULTS, CONTD.

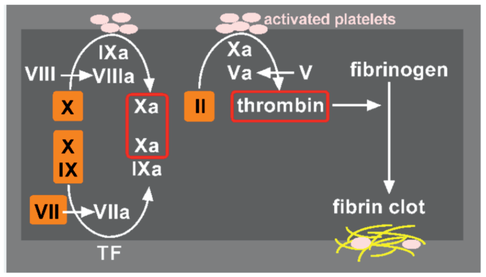

Figure 2: The mechanism by which 4-factor PCC reverses the effects of Factor Xa Inhibitors

MECHANISM OF ACTION OF FACTOR Xa INHIBITORS

Factor Xa inhibitors exert their anticoagulant effect by selectively and directly inhibiting Factor Xa, a key enzyme in the coagulation cascade. Factor Xa plays a central role in the conversion of prothrombin (Factor II) to thrombin (Factor IIa), a critical step required for fibrin clot formation.
By binding to the active site of Factor Xa, these agents prevent thrombin generation without directly inhibiting thrombin itself. This results in reduced fibrin formation and decreased platelet activation. Common direct Factor Xa inhibitors include apixaban, rivaroxaban, edoxaban, and betrixaban.
Selective inhibition of Factor Xa enables effective anticoagulation with more predictable pharmacokinetics and fewer dietary and drug interactions than vitamin K antagonists. Suppression of thrombin generation increases bleeding risk, highlighting the importance of effective reversal strategies in acute hemorrhagic events.

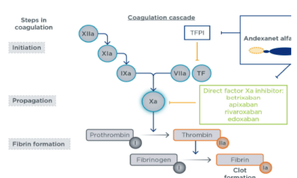

Figure 3: The propagation and fibrin formation of the clotting cascade

ROLE OF ANDEXANET ALFA AND 4F PCCs

Factor Xa inhibitors are associated with bleeding risks. Two primary approaches are currently used: andexanet alfa and four-factor prothrombin complex concentrates (4F-PCCs).

ROLE OF ANDEXANET ALFA AND 4F PCCs CONT.

AA, recombinant modified Factor Xa decoy protein that binds and sequesters Factor Xa inhibitors, rapidly reducing anti-Xa activity.
AA is used for the reversal of apixaban and rivaroxaban in patients with uncontrolled/life threatening bleeding. Limitations include high cost, limited availability, and risk of thrombotic events.
4F-PCCs contain clotting factors II, VII, IX, and X and are used to reverse Factor Xa inhibitors.
Studies suggest 4F-PCCs may provide effective hemostasis in acute bleeding events.
AA offers targeted reversal of Factor Xa inhibitors, 4F-PCCs serve as a practical alternative when AA is unavailable or contraindicated.
Selection of reversal therapy depends on bleeding severity, patient risk factors, institutional protocols, and resource availability.

A BROAD SPECTRUM REVERSAL AGENT

Ciraparantag (C) is a broad-spectrum investigational reversal agent, binds to and neutralizes anticoagulants that target Factor IIa and Factor Xa, and inactivates these anticoagulants. C may reverse the effects of multiple anticoagulants (dabigatran, oral Factor Xa inhibitors, UFH, and LMWH). C is thus a potential universal reversal agent, and rapidly reverses the anticoagulant effect of edoxaban, by normalization of whole-blood clotting time. C was well tolerated, with doses ranging from 100 mg to 300 mg administered as an IV push. The mechanism of action of C is shown in Figure 4.

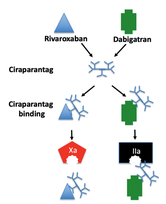

Figure 4: The mechanism of action of Ciraparantag

CONCLUSION

Factor Xa inhibitors have improved anticoagulation therapy, but pose bleeding risks. Reversal strategies such as andexanet alfa and 4F-PCC are essential in emergencies. Although both agents are effective, the potential for thrombosis with AA highlights the need for further research to guide optimal reversal in clinical practice. Larger prospective studies are needed for further evaluation.

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