

## **NBCA BLOOD CLOT AND STROKE RISK AWARENESS SURVEY FACT SHEET**

### **Incidence and Impact**

- Atrial fibrillation or AF is the most common type of arrhythmia (abnormal heart rhythm) and it affects 2.6 million people in the United States. The irregular heartbeat disrupts the flow of blood through the heart and can cause blood clots that can lead to stroke to form.
- AF results in a five-fold increased risk for ischemic stroke – one of the most common complications of AF.
- Mortality associated with AF – as the primary or underlying cause of death – has increased in the past two decades.
- It is estimated that by the year 2050 about 12 million people in the U.S. will be affected by AF.

### **NBCA Blood Clot and Stroke Risk Awareness Survey**

- The NBCA Blood Clot and Stroke Risk Awareness Survey was conducted to measure gaps in awareness of blood clot and stroke risk among AF patients. This Survey also was conducted to measure gaps in the prevention of blood clots that can cause stroke and to measure gaps in adherence to these prevention practices.
- 500 AF patients, enrolled from an online research panel, participated in the survey:
  - Mean patient age 57.93
    - 4% aged 20-39
    - 82% aged 40-69
    - 14% aged 70-85+
  - 53% female

- The Survey instrument consisted of questions along four different paths:
  - Awareness of blood clots that can cause stroke
  - Information received from healthcare professionals about blood clots that can cause stroke
  - Prophylaxis experiences related to the prevention of blood clots that can cause stroke
  - Adherence to anticoagulation

### **Key Survey Findings Among AF Patients: Awareness**

- Among all AF patients surveyed, awareness of blood clots was high:
  - 91% reported they were aware of blood clots
  - Virtually all of these same patients said they recognized blood clots as life threatening

### **Key Survey Findings Among AF Patients: Information**

- While most patients were aware of blood clots and report they were informed about blood clot and stroke risk by their doctor or another healthcare professional, more than 1/4 of all AF patients surveyed did say that they were not told by their doctor or any other healthcare professional about blood clot/stroke risk due to AF or about blood clot/stroke prevention.
- Most AF patients surveyed said they were not given additional information or referred to other information sources about blood clots/stroke.
- 60% of AF patients surveyed said they were given or referred to education or information about blood clots and stroke risk:
  - 85% of this group said they were given a brochure or pamphlet
  - 30% or more were referred to a Website or articles
  - 12% were referred to books and 8% were given CDs
- When asked what type of education or information about blood clots and stroke risk they would prefer:
  - 93% of all patients surveyed said they would prefer a CD or DVD
  - More than 70% said they prefer Websites, books, and articles
  - 52% said they prefer brochures or pamphlets

### **Key Survey Findings Among AF Patients: Prophylaxis**

- In terms of prophylaxis experiences reported by patients, aspirin was reported by 67% of all AF patients surveyed as the most widely used treatment for the prevention of blood clots.
- 12% of patients said they were given low molecular weight heparin.
- Just more than half or 52% of patients surveyed said they were given warfarin therapy:
  - Among the 259 warfarin users surveyed, nearly 1/3 said that warfarin was either moderately or very difficult to use.

- Among the group of 84 AF patients surveyed who said warfarin was moderately or very difficult to use, the treatment barriers they cited included:
- the need for regular blood tests, 76%
  - bleeding, 70%
  - bruising, 63%
  - dosing changes, 57%
  - drug interactions, 50%
  - dietary restrictions, 48%

### **Key Survey Findings Among AF Patients: Adherence**

- Among the 259 warfarin users participating in this survey, 74% report adherence to warfarin therapy.
- 83% of the warfarin users surveyed said they were given information or education about warfarin therapy.
- Most of the patients who did discontinue warfarin therapy – 26% of the 259 warfarin users or 68 patients surveyed – did so at the direction of their doctor.
- When asked what factors they thought might contribute to a more optimal type of treatment to prevent blood clots:
  - More than 50% of all AF patients surveyed said a blood thinning medication with minimal bleeding complications and/or a blood thinning medication with fewer drug interactions
  - More than 40% of AF patients surveyed said they would prefer a therapy that did not require regular blood tests or monitoring and/or one that had fewer dietary restrictions

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For additional information, please visit [www.stoptheclot.org](http://www.stoptheclot.org)

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