

Traditional predictors of in-hospital mortality after coronary artery bypass grafting: Current status

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Abstract

The most serious early adverse events after coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) include in-hospital mortality, low cardiac output, perioperative myocardial infarction, renal dysfunction, stroke, atrial fibrillation and sternal wound infection. Prediction of outcome after CABG has a considerable importance which constitutes guidance for proper perioperative care and improved postoperative outcome. Advances in anesthesia and surgical techniques play a role in enrollment of patients with higher risk for CABG which indicates periodic updating of the traditional predictors of outcome. This review tries to highlight the current status of the important preoperative predictors of early mortality and morbidity after CABG.

Abbreviations: AF: Atrial Fibrillation; BMI: Body Mass Index; CABG: Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting; CAD: Coronary Artery Disease; CCS: Canadian Cardiovascular Society; COPD: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease; CPB: Cardiopulmonary Bypass; CrCl: Creatinine Clearance; cTn: cardiac troponin; DM: Diabetes Mellitus; EuroSCORE: European System for Cardiac Operative Risk valuation; HbA1c: Haemoglobin A1c; IABP: Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump; LCOS: Low cardiac output syndrome; LMS: Left Main Stem; LVD: Left Ventricular Dysfunction; LVEF: Left Ventricular Ejection Fraction; NSTEMI: Non-ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction; PMI: Perioperative Myocardial Infarction; POAF: Postoperative Atrial Fibrillation; PVD: Peripheral Vascular Disease; SBP: Systolic Blood Pressure; SWI: Sternal Wound Infection.

Introduction

Awareness of perioperative risk factors associated with mortality and morbidity after cardiac surgery is an important issue that may provide valuable insights on areas to focus for better outcome and improved quality of care [1].

Research for perioperative predictors of outcome results in establishment of multiple risk stratification models, of which European system for cardiac operative risk evaluation (EuroSCORE) and Parsonnet score (Table 1) are the most frequently used models [2,3].

In the recent years more, complex preoperative patient profile had been referred for coronary artery bypass (CABG) including older patients, more advanced and diffuse coronary artery disease, impaired left ventricular function, failed previous percutaneous manipulations, more serious comorbidities, and multiple reoperations [4].

The increasing complexity and disability of patients is an important reason for periodic update of the perioperative predictors to account for the changes in patient characteristics and contemporary surgical techniques [5,6]. The aim of this review is to highlight the current status of the established preoperative predictors of adverse outcome after CABG.

Predictors of in-hospital mortality after CABG

Age at surgery

Respecting more extensive coronary atherosclerosis, older age has been recognized as an independent predictor of short- and long-term mortality and adverse outcome after CABG [7,8].

Although age of 60 years is traditionally considered as a cut-off value for worse outcome after CABG, other values of 65, 70, 75 or 80 years has been recognized, mostly due to the decline in operation risks thanks to the advances of technology, methods and proper selection of patients [9,10].

Female gender

Female gender is still recognized as an independent predictor of short- and long-term mortality and adverse events after CABG [11,12]. The gender-specific differences in outcome may be aggravated by older age, advanced symptoms, urgency, coronary artery diameters, as well as higher incidence of comorbidities such as diabetes, arterial hypertension and hypercholesterolemia [13].

Obesity

Obesity defined as body mass index (BMI) ≥ 30 kg/m² has been reported to be associated with increased pulmonary morbidity [14] and severe obesity (BMI ≥ 40 kg/m²) has been determined as an independent risk factor for longer length of stay after CABG [15].

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Table 1. The established predictors of mortality after cardiac surgery as determined in EuroSCORE and Parsonnet score models for risk stratification. Modified from references [2,3].

EuroSCORE		Parsonnet Score	
Risk factors	Score	Risk factors	Score
Patient related factors:			
Age:		Age:	
Per each 5 years above 60 years	1	<70 years	7
		71-74 years	12
		75 years	20
Female gender	1	Female gender	1
Serum creatinine >2.3 mg preoperatively	2	Dialysis dependency	10
Critical preoperative state (ventricular tachycardia or fibrillation, aborted sudden death, or preoperative heart massage, ventilation, inotropic support or IABP)	3	Catastrophic states (acute structural defect, cardiogenic shock, acute renal failure or similar conditions)	Oct-50
Neurological dysfunction affecting walking or daily activities	2	Other rare circumstances (paraplegia, pacemaker dependency, severe asthma, congenital heart disease in adults)	02-Oct
Extracardiac arteriopathy: claudication or obstruction >50% of carotid arteries or previous or planned intervention for abdominal aorta, carotid arteries or peripheral arteries	2	Preoperative IABP	20
Active endocarditis patient still under antibiotic treatment for endocarditis at the time of surgery	1	Morbid obesity (≥ 1.5 of ideal weight)	3
Chronic pulmonary disease	3	Diabetes	3
		Hypertension (Systolic blood pressure > 140 mmHg)	3
Cardiac related factors			
Ejection fraction:		Ejection fraction:	
30-50%	1	30-49%	2
<30%	3	<30%	4
Pulmonary hypertension: Systolic pressure of pulmonary artery >60 mmHg			
Unstable angina requiring use of nitrates before arrival to operating room	2		
Recent MI <90 days	2		
Procedure related factors			
Emergency within 24 hours	2	Catheter lab emergency	10
Reoperation:		Reoperation:	
Requiring opening of the pericardium	3	First	5
		Second	10
Another heart procedure at the same time as CABG	2	CABG at time of valve surgery	2
Surgery on thoracic aorta for disorder of ascending, arch or descending aorta	3	Aortic surgery	5
Post-infarction VSD	4	LV aneurysm	5
		Aortic surgery and aortic gradient ≥ 120 mmHg	7
		Mitral surgery	5
		Mitral surgery and PA pressure ≥ 60 mmHg	8

The impact of obesity on early mortality after CABG remains uncertain [16]. Obesity has not been associated with increased in-hospital or 3 months mortality [17], while morbid obesity was recognized as an independent predictor for late mortality after CABG [18].

Compared to non-obese patients, overweight and obese individuals have similar early mortality rate following CABG which can substantiate the presence of obesity paradox only in terms that elevated BMI patients have comparable outcome with non-obese [19].

Diabetes mellitus

Patients with diabetes and CAD often have more extensive and complicated atherosclerosis, thus they are at higher risk of developing major adverse events and death after CABG with prolonged hospital stay and greater hospital costs than are patients without diabetes [20].

Diabetes on insulin treatment is considered as a predictor of outcome after cardiac surgery [21]. Patients with insulin treated DM have a significantly higher rate of mortality and major adverse events compared to patients with non-insulin treated DM patients after CABG [22].

Elevated preoperative haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) is debated as a predictor of mortality and morbidity irrespective of previous diabetic

status. In particular, the mortality risk for CABG is quadrupled at HbA1c levels >8.6% [23]. In a recent study preoperative HbA1c was the only diabetic variable to independently predict operative mortality after CABG [24].

Hypertension

Isolated systolic hypertension (systolic blood pressure (SBP) >140 mmHg) only was reported to be associated with adverse outcomes after CABG, causing a 40% increase in the likelihood of postoperative morbidity [25]. Recent studies reported hypertension among risk factors associated with early mortality in haemodialysis patients undergoing CABG [26], and it has been considered with other demographic risk factors among predictors of AF after CABG [27].

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is traditionally established as a predictor of postoperative morbidity and mortality after CABG surgery, especially in patients older than 75 years with severe COPD and receiving steroids [28].

The known postoperative complications of COPD include respiratory failure, re-intubation, sternal dehiscence, prolonged

mechanical ventilation, rhythm disturbances and prolonged hospital stays [29]. A recent study reported that COPD does not necessarily lead to mortality, readmission, or AMI after CABG, and the major respiratory complications associated with CABG in patients with COPD were pneumonia and acute respiratory failure [30].

Extra-cardiac arteriopathy

Evidence from recent studies suggests that peripheral vascular disease (PVD) still adversely affects the short- and long-term outcomes after CABG [31]. However, diversity of symptoms as well as the severity and location of occluded vessels may influence outcome [32].

Carotid artery disease is considered as an epiphenomenon that serves as a marker for diffuse systemic atherosclerotic disease [33]. Extracranial carotid artery stenosis (CAS) is a risk factor for perioperative stroke in patients undergoing CABG surgery [34]. In patients with 50% to 80% stenosis of the carotid arteries, the incidence of stroke after CABG ranged from 3% to 10%, and approached 22% in patients with >80% stenosis [35].

Neurological dysfunction

Preoperative neurological events are determined as risk factors for postoperative neurologic events and in-hospital mortality particularly with cardiopulmonary bypass [36].

Preoperative stroke was reported to be associated with mortality, increased risk of early and late postoperative stroke, and prolonged length of stay [37]. However, optimal time interval between stroke and surgery has a debate, as there is no contemporary evidence that more recent preoperative stroke predisposed patients undergoing CABG to have adverse perioperative outcomes [38].

Chronic renal impairment

Preoperative renal impairment is a well-established predictor of adverse events in after CABG [39]. However, when compared with expected survival, only advanced renal impairment led to worse outcome, and patients with moderate renal impairment had an outcome similar to that expected [40].

Serum creatinine is a main predicting factor in the scoring systems for risk estimation with a significant impact on surgical outcome after cardiac surgery [41]. For a better estimate of kidney failure degree, current risk scores, such as EuroSCORE II, have included creatinine clearance (CrCl) calculation rather than serum creatinine to predict mortality after cardiac surgery [42,43].

Cystatin C which is less affected by dietary protein intake has been shown to have a greater predictive power than serum creatinine for overall mortality after elective CABG [44].

Left main stem disease

A significant Left main stem (LMS) disease, defined as reduction of $\geq 50\%$ of the vessel diameter, is an important predictor of cardiopulmonary morbidity and mortality after CABG [45]. Multiple clinical variables have been shown as prognostic factors in LMS lesion, including: cardiogenic shock, ST-elevation MI, reduced LVEF, older age, multi-vessel disease, and diabetes mellitus [46].

Severity of angina

High Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) class of angina before CABG is still determined as an independent predictor of adverse outcome and quality of life after CABG [47].

Acute coronary syndrome (unstable angina and non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction) is determined as an independent predictor of early mortality, however the long-term outcomes after CABG are similar between patients with acute coronary syndrome and stable angina [48].

Perioperative myocardial infarction

Perioperative myocardial infarction (PMI) is a well-known cause of morbidity and mortality after CABG surgery [49]. Ninety days threshold is traditionally accepted as minimal time interval between MI and CABG [20]. However, a recent study showed that patients operated on 1 to 2 days and 3 to 7 days after MI had a similar mortality rate [50].

It has been suggested that CABG may be safely performed in non-ST elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI) patients at any time after the first 6 hours of the event in patients with cardiac troponin I (cTnI) <0.15 ng/ml [51]. The contemporary findings show that it is safe to wait until cTnT levels decrease to the 1 ng/ml threshold value in cTnT positive patients having a stable course [52].

Urgency of CABG

Urgency of CABG (urgent, emergent or salvage operation) was determined as a significant predictor of outcome after CABG in Euroscore II risk model [53]. Urgency is associated with significantly higher adverse outcomes, including death, when compared with elective CABG [54].

Early mortality in patients undergoing emergent and salvage CABG is substantial, especially in salvage patients. Long-term survival is acceptable in both emergent and salvage patients [55].

Low left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF)

Preoperative low LVEF is still an important predictor of mortality and morbidity after CABG [56,57]. However, surgery remains superior to medical therapy alone in patients with low LVEF [58,59]. Accurate selections of patients and risk/benefit evaluation, as well as planning of surgical and anesthesiological management are mandatory to improve outcome [60].

Conclusions

Predicting outcome after CABG is multifactorial. In the current literature, traditional predictors of adverse outcome are subjected to isolated or combined revision and validation. The cut-off value of age as a predictor of worse outcome does not stand at 60 years. The predictive value of female gender is further investigated in respecting of gender difference in preoperative comorbidities. A debate exists regarding the impact of obesity on early outcome after CABG. Not only suffering from DM, but also elevation of preoperative HbA1c has a useful predictive value. The role of COPD in predicting outcome is related to presence of other risk factors especially older age and steroid therapy. Carotid artery stenosis $> 50\%$ remains a significant predictor of postoperative stroke. The optimal time interval between preoperative stroke and CABG is still under debate. The predictive role of serum creatinine is questionable in comparison to creatinine clearance and Cystatin C. Left main stem disease $\geq 50\%$, severity of angina, perioperative MI, urgency of surgery and low preoperative LVEF are still recognized as important predictors of adverse outcome after CABG. Timing between NSTEMI and CABG is related to reduction of the level of cardiac troponin. In patients with low LVEF, proper selection of patients for surgery and myocardial viability still has a

great influence on outcome after CABG. Searching for more predictors related to the current practical era and updating the established risk models of adverse outcome after CABG is highly recommended.

Conflict of Interest

Author Yasser Ali Kamal declares that he has no conflict of interest. Author Shady Al-Elwany declares that he has no conflict of interest. Author Ahmed Ghoneim declares that he has no conflict of interest. Author Ahmed El-Minshawy declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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