ATRIAL FIBRILLATION PREDICTS COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT IN ISCHEMIC STROKE PATIENTS

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Background: Atrial fibrillation is associated with an increased incidence of cognitive impairment.

Methods: A retrospective chart review study involving 707 patients admitted for rehabilitation after an ischemic stroke. Cognitive status was assessed by the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), and scores lower than 24 points were considered as suggestive of cognitive impairment.

Results: Age, gender, Parkinson disease, and MMSE emerged as the only statistically significant parameters differing between those with and without atrial fibrillation. After adjusting for confounding variables, atrial fibrillation (odds ratio 1.64, 95% CI 1.032-2.59, \( p=0.03 \)) was associated with an increased risk of cognitive impairment.

Conclusions: Our findings suggest that atrial fibrillation is independently associated with lower MMSE scores in ischemic stroke patients. It identifies individuals in need of specifically targeted interventions and may assist in selecting and developing resources for cognitively impaired atrial fibrillation patients.