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30-Day mortality in vascular surgery during the COVID pandemic: 1st wave outcomes

Fabio Stocco, Martin Michel, Farihah Khaliq, Abdullah Bin Sahl, Joseph Foster, Duncan Parry
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

Aims: To assess the 30-day mortality rate in patients undergoing vascular procedures in a single vascular centre during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methods: Retrospective analysis of all vascular operations undertaken at our unit from 11th March 2020 to 16th November 2020. Thirty-day mortality rate, ASA grade, 30-day Covid-19 PCR test positivity and cause of death were assessed. Mortality rate was compared to previous five-year average with a Chi-Square test.

Results: Within the observed period, 237 vascular operations were performed (49% operative reduction). 57 patients (24%) were operated electively through the "Green pathway" (day case) and there were no perioperative positive Covid-19 tests. 180 patients were operated through the "Amber" (elective Inpatient) or "Red" (emergency) pathway. Eight inpatients (4.4%) died within 30 days from surgery, similar to the average 30-day mortality observed in the previous years (5.9% $p > 0.05$). Three patients (1.42%) tested positive preoperatively but were all asymptomatic from Covid-19. One patient who died tested positive for Covid-19 but was asymptomatic from a respiratory aspect and died of cardiovascular disease.

Conclusion: We found no difference in 30-day post-operative mortality rate during the initial wave of Covid-19. Only 3 patients undergoing emergency operations tested positive. This study does reinforce the "Green pathway" strategy for elective patients to ensure minimising exposure to Covid-19 but we also did not witness any difference in mortality rate in the "Amber" or "Red" pathway. The impact of the second or third "wave" on current numbers will need to be studied further.