

Nonvalvular Atrial Fibrillation (NVAF)-Related Stroke Prevention Quality Measurement

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Atrial fibrillation (AF), a quivering or irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia), is the most common cardiac arrhythmia seen in clinical practice. Millions of Americans have AF and numbers are expected to double by 2050. People with AF have a five-fold increased risk of embolic stroke, increased risk of heart failure and cognitive impairment, reduced quality of life, and higher overall mortality. Appropriate treatment can save lives and reduce risk of negative health outcomes but requires identifying individuals with AF, effective patient education, choosing the appropriate therapeutic approach, and adherence to treatment. This National Quality Forum (NQF) Measure Incubator® project brought together a multistakeholder Expert Panel to share input, expertise, and strategic thinking on how to improve quality of care for individuals with AF and identify measure concepts that address gaps in quality measurement related to nonvalvular atrial fibrillation (NVAF)-related stroke prevention.

This Measure Incubator® project is the first step toward facilitating the development of measures to fill critical gaps in quality measurement for nonvalvular atrial fibrillation (NVAF)-related stroke prevention.

STRATEGY SESSION

In July 2020, NQF convened a Measure Incubator® Strategy Session with a multistakeholder Expert Panel comprised of clinicians, researchers, pharmacists, measure developers, payers, and patient partners. At this meeting, panelists discussed the quality of care issues that affect patients with AF, including challenges in ineffective patient education, suboptimal initiation of anticoagulation therapy, and substandard treatment adherence and selection. Panelists emphasized the need to consider patient-level barriers to help understand their condition, treatment aims, and the importance of adherence. They noted that quality measurement for AF care can be challenging, but that there are opportunities to address critical care processes through measurement to help prevent stroke.

High-priority measure concepts address screening for health literacy, extended cardiac monitoring following cryptogenic stroke, anticoagulation dosing, anticoagulation prescribing in primary care, shared decision making, and stroke outcome.

The Expert Panel identified and prioritized six measure concepts, based on potential impact and feasibility, that could be developed into quality measures for NVAF-related stroke prevention. Panelists recommended that these measures concepts be moved forward into development and testing.

WHAT IS THE ENVISIONED OUTCOME?

NQF seeks to facilitate the development of one or more measure concepts into fully specified and tested performance measures, as well as work to improve initiation of anticoagulation therapy and patient adherence to treatment in AF care. NQF will explore funding to support these efforts.

This Measure Incubator® project is financially supported by Bristol Myers Squibb Pfizer Alliance and Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc. In accordance with the [NQF Measure Incubator Conflict of Interest Principles](#), these project sponsors have not influenced the outcomes and activities associated with this project.

For this project, NQF staff used AF as a general term for nonvalvular AF (NVAF). More information on the distinction between NVAF and valvular AF can be found [here](#).