Does Radiofrequency Ablation Impact Atrial Fibrillation Outcomes?
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Introduction
- Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a growing clinical problem in the developing world.
- Paroxysmal (defined as <7 days duration) and persistent (defined as >7 days and < 3 years duration) AF patients are often grouped together when comparing treatment outcomes in contemporary randomized trials which could impact results.
- We examined a registry of AF patients undergoing radiofrequency catheter ablation therapy by comparing the outcomes between persistent and paroxysmal AF patients.

Methods
- Radiofrequency ablation appears significantly more effective in preventing death and recurrence of AF in patients with paroxysmal AF.
- RF ablation in persistent AF patients significantly improved survival but did not impact recurrence of AF compared to the non-ablated persistent patients.
- This may be due to prolonged disease burden and possibly atrial fibrosis setting up a more arrhythmic substrate.
- Applying ablation strategies earlier in the AF natural history appears appropriate.

Results
- There was a significantly lower frequency of recurrent AF in ablated vs non-ablated pts with paroxysmal AF (ablated 11/113, nonablated 25/83, p = .01, mean age= 72.2±10.7 years), but not with persistent AF (ablated 51/136, nonablated 24/62, p = .87, mean age= 72±11.1 years).

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