

Contents

Section I PERIOPERATIVE MEDICINE

- Chapter 1 **Perioperative Cardiovascular Evaluation and Management for Noncardiac Surgery, 2**
Matthew G. Bean • Annemarie Thompson • Kamrouz Ghadimi
- Chapter 2 **Perioperative Approach to the High-Risk Cardiac Patient, 16**
Torin Shear • Jeffrey Katz • Steven B. Greenberg • Joel A. Kaplan
- Chapter 3 **Care of the Patient With Coronary Stents Undergoing Noncardiac Surgery, 33**
Emilio B. Lobato
- Chapter 4 **Cardiovascular Implantable Electronic Device Management in Noncardiac Surgery, 70**
Brett Cronin • Timothy M. Maus • Swapnil Khoche • Marc A. Rozner
- Chapter 5 **Left Ventricular Assist Device–Supported Patient Presenting for Noncardiac Surgery, 100**
Marc E. Stone
- Chapter 6 **Anesthesia for Noncardiac Surgery After Heart Transplant, 120**
Swapnil Khoche • Brett Cronin
- Chapter 7 **Pulmonary Hypertension in Noncardiac Surgical Patients, 138**
Dean Bowker • Dalia Banks
- Chapter 8 **Adult Congenital Heart Disease in Noncardiac Surgery, 165**
Victor C. Baum • Duncan G. De Souza • Brett Cronin • Timothy M. Maus

Section II

ANESTHESIA FOR NONCARDIAC SURGERY

- Chapter 9 **Cardiovascular Monitoring in Noncardiac Surgery, 198**
Gerard R. Manecke Jr • Timothy M. Maus
- Chapter 10 **Echocardiography in Noncardiac Surgery, 214**
Byron Ferguson • Joshua Zimmerman • Timothy M. Maus
- Chapter 11 **Cardiovascular Pharmacology in Noncardiac Surgery, 247**
Liem P. Nguyen • Neal S. Gerstein
- Chapter 12 **General, Regional, or Monitored Anesthesia Care for the Cardiac Patient Undergoing Noncardiac Surgery, 289**
Brian Frugoni • K. Annette Mizuguchi
- Chapter 13 **Vascular Surgery: Endovascular and Open Surgery, 313**
Elizabeth A. Valentine • E. Andrew Ochroch
- Chapter 14 **The Cardiac Patient for Thoracic Noncardiac Surgery, 340**
Alexander Huang • Peter D. Slinger • Steven M. Neustein • Edmond Cohen
- Chapter 15 **Anesthesia for Cardioversion and Electrophysiologic Procedures, 379**
Marshall K. Lee • Neal S. Gerstein • Peter M. Schulman • Peter M. Jessel
- Chapter 16 **Cardiac Patients Requiring Emergent Noncardiac Surgery, 404**
Lev Deriy • Neal S. Gerstein • Pramod Panikkath • Harish Ram • Brian Starr
- Chapter 17 **Cardiac Considerations During Orthotopic Liver Transplantation, 453**
Ron Barak • Ruth S. Waterman
- Chapter 18 **The Pregnant Patient With Cardiac Disease, 466**
Menachem M. Weiner • Joshua Hamburger • Yaakov Beilin
- Chapter 19 **Goal-Directed Fluid Therapy, Perioperative Pain Management, and Enhanced Recovery, 493**
Gerard R. Manecke Jr • Engy T. Said

Section III

CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE

- Chapter 20 **Management in the Postanesthesia Care Unit of Complications in Cardiac Patients, 510**
Albert P. Nguyen • E. Orestes O'Brien • Ulrich H. Schmidt
- Chapter 21 **Postoperative Care of the Critically Ill, 526**
Jeffrey Katz • Torin Shear • Steven B. Greenberg
- Chapter 22 **Reducing Major Adverse Cardiac Events and All-Cause Mortality in Noncardiac Surgery: Perioperative Strategies, 538**
Antonio Pisano • Michele Oppizzi • Stefano Turi • Giovanni Landoni

Index, 579

Chapter 1

Perioperative Cardiovascular Evaluation and Management for Noncardiac Surgery

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Key Points

1. Preoperative assessment of the cardiac patient undergoing noncardiac surgery includes risk assessment for major adverse cardiac events (MACEs).
2. Categorizing risk for MACEs is dependent on patient risk factors, including the noncardiac procedure, patient age, emergent status of the procedure, preexisting organ dysfunction, and independence in daily activities.
3. Cardiac risk model calculators exist to facilitate quantification of risk and aid the perioperative physician with optimizing patient care.
4. The 2014 American College of Cardiology (ACC)/American Heart Association (AHA) guideline document of perioperative cardiovascular evaluation and management of patients undergoing noncardiac surgery provides a valuable stepwise approach to the care of the patient with cardiovascular disease presenting for noncardiac surgery.
5. Within the 2014 ACC/AHA guideline document are important updates related to the perioperative administration of various cardiac-related medications.
6. Antiplatelet therapy and the temporal relationship between percutaneous coronary interventions (PCIs) and scheduled surgery determine timing of and perioperative management during noncardiac surgery.
7. The 2016 ACC/AHA guideline focused update on duration of dual antiplatelet therapy (DAPT) in patients with coronary artery disease provides important updates related to the timing of surgery and management of DAPT after PCI.
8. No specific recommendations are available regarding transfusion and the decision to transfuse; the hemoglobin goal is decided by the perioperative team.
9. Pulmonary arterial hypertension and subsequent right ventricular dysfunction are a major cause of poor perioperative outcomes, and the perioperative team should optimize ventilation/perfusion matching and reduce pulmonary vascular resistance.

Patients undergoing surgery experience a well-described stress response of sympathetic nervous system activation, insulin resistance, cytokine production, leukocyte demargination, and pituitary hormone secretion. These physiologic changes, in addition to preexisting patient comorbidities, surgical complexity, and postoperative complications, may contribute to the occurrence of adverse perioperative cardiovascular events in patients undergoing noncardiac surgery. Every patient should undergo an individualized

risk assessment to delineate the risks, benefits, and alternatives of surgical intervention as part of a perioperative team approach. In the absence of a net benefit, interventions for optimizing cardiovascular health or consideration of alternative approaches should be performed to ensure the maximum potential benefit at a minimum risk to the patient.

This chapter reviews preoperative cardiac evaluation, including a discussion of common risk calculators, to assist perioperative clinicians with risk assessment and surgical planning. The American College of Cardiology (ACC) and American Heart Association (AHA) clinical practice guideline on perioperative cardiovascular evaluation and management of patients undergoing noncardiac surgery is also reviewed. Recommendations regarding specific and frequently encountered perioperative challenges are discussed, such as medical therapy with β -blockers, angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), α_2 -agonists, aspirin (including dual antiplatelet therapy [DAPT]), vitamin K antagonists (VKAs), and new oral anticoagulants (NOACs) are addressed. Perioperative management of anemia, pulmonary vascular disease, and right ventricular (RV) dysfunction is also discussed.

PREOPERATIVE CARDIAC ASSESSMENT: CATEGORIZING RISK

Compared with their healthier counterparts, patients with underlying cardiovascular disease have an increased risk of perioperative cardiac complications. This is in part due to the presence of coronary artery disease (CAD), leading to impaired left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) and in part due to the physiologic factors associated with surgery that predispose patients to myocardial ischemia. Oxygen supply and demand mismatch may occur secondary to blood loss and hemodynamic changes related to anesthetic administration and surgical stimulation.

Validated algorithms have been developed to determine the cardiovascular risk of mortality and morbidity encountered per patient for each noncardiac operation. Stratification is performed to objectively determine and categorize patients as low, intermediate, or high risk. High-risk patients include those with recent myocardial infarction (MI) or unstable angina, decompensated heart failure (HF), high-grade arrhythmias, or hemodynamically significant valvular heart disease, such as aortic stenosis. These patients are at increased risk for perioperative major adverse cardiac events (MACE), including MI, HF, cardiac arrest, conduction abnormalities, and sudden cardiac death. Certainly, the emergent or urgent status of some surgery plays a large role in estimating risk due to the absence of time for risk assessment and modification. Patients with the high-risk conditions listed are at increased risk of a perioperative cardiovascular event compared with normal, age-matched control participants; however, in most emergent cases, the benefit of proceeding with surgery outweighs the risk of delay to perform additional testing.

The initial preoperative evaluation is typically performed by either a primary care physician or an anesthesiologist, and referral to a cardiologist is warranted if specialized procedures are indicated for life-threatening conditions. Intermediate- or high-risk patients may have angina, dyspnea, syncope, and palpitations, as well as history of heart disease (ischemic, valvular, structural myocardial disease), hypertension, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and cerebrovascular or peripheral arterial disease. Cardiac functional status may be expressed in metabolic equivalents (METs), as initially determined by the Duke Activity Status Index (Table 1.1). One MET is equivalent to the adult resting oxygen utilization, and an important indicator for MACE after major noncardiac surgery is the preoperative inability to achieve 4 METs or greater, such

Table 1.1 Duke Activity Status Index

Can You...	Weight (in METs)
1. Take care of yourself, i.e., eating, dressing, bathing, or using the toilet?	2.75
2. Walk indoors, such as around your house?	1.75
3. Walk a block or two on level ground?	2.75
4. Climb a flight of stairs or walk up a hill?	5.50
5. Run a short distance?	8.00
6. Do light work around the house such as dusting or washing dishes?	2.70
7. Do moderate work around the house such as vacuuming, sweeping floors, or carrying groceries?	3.50
8. Do heavy work around the house such as scrubbing floors or lifting or moving heavy furniture?	8.00
9. Do yardwork such as raking leaves, weeding, or pushing a power mower?	4.50
10. Have sexual relations?	5.25
11. Participate in moderate recreational activities such as golf, bowling, dancing, doubles tennis, or throwing a baseball or football?	6.00
12. Participate in strenuous sports such as swimming, singles tennis, football, basketball, or skiing?	7.50

MET, Metabolic equivalents where 1 MET is the equivalent of resting oxygen consumption.
 From Hlatky MA, Boineau RE, Higginbotham MB, et al. A brief self-administered questionnaire to determine functional capacity (the Duke Activity Status Index). *Am J Cardiol*. 1989;64:651–654.

as by climbing two flights of stairs or walking four city blocks. The decision to pursue cardiovascular or pulmonary testing should be considered only if the results would impact surgical decision making or would likely identify an immediately life-threatening condition requiring timely management.

PREOPERATIVE CARDIAC ASSESSMENT USING RISK MODELING CALCULATORS

Risk model calculators estimate the probability of a perioperative event based on information obtained from the history, physical examination, and surgery type. These models are more applicable for patients at intermediate or high perioperative cardiac risk during noncardiac surgery. Patients at low risk for MACEs should proceed to surgery without further evaluation.

Specific information pertaining to both the patient and the surgery must be provided to appropriately identify individualized risk using a risk calculator. Perioperative information is entered into one or both of two commonly used perioperative risk indices: the Revised Cardiac Risk Index (RCRI) (Fig. 1.1) (<http://www.mdcalc.com/revised-cardiac-risk-index-for-pre-operative-risk>) or the American College of Surgeons' National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS-NSQIP) (Fig. 1.2) surgical risk calculators (<http://site.acsnsqip.org>). The RCRI determines preoperative risk based on risk of surgery, history of ischemic heart disease, congestive heart failure (CHF), cerebrovascular disease, preoperative use of insulin, and creatinine greater than 2.0 mg/dL. The ACS-NSQIP calculator incorporates 20 patient risk factors in addition to the

Revised Cardiac Risk Index for Pre-Operative Risk		Revised Cardiac Risk Index for Pre-Operative Risk	
Estimates risk of cardiac complications after surgery.		Estimates risk of cardiac complications after surgery.	
High-Risk Surgery • Intraperitoneal • Intrathoracic • Supraaortic • Suprainguinal vascular	High-Risk Surgery • YES	High-Risk Surgery • NO	High-Risk Surgery • YES
History of ischemic heart disease • History of MI • History of positive exercise test • Current chest pain considered due to myocardial ischemia • Use of nitrate therapy • ECG with pathological Q waves	History of ischemic heart disease • NO	History of ischemic heart disease • YES	History of ischemic heart disease • NO
History of congestive heart failure • Pulmonary edema, bilateral rales or S3 gallop • Peripheral nocturnal dyspnea • CQX showing pulmonary vascular redistribution	History of congestive heart failure • NO	History of congestive heart failure • YES	History of congestive heart failure • YES
History of cerebrovascular disease • Prior TIA or stroke	History of cerebrovascular disease • NO	History of cerebrovascular disease • YES	History of cerebrovascular disease • NO
Pre-operative treatment with insulin	Pre-operative treatment with insulin • NO	Pre-operative treatment with insulin • YES	Pre-operative treatment with insulin • NO
Pre-operative creatinine >2 mg/dL	Pre-operative creatinine >2 mg/dL • NO	Pre-operative creatinine >2 mg/dL • YES	Pre-operative creatinine >2 mg/dL • YES
0 points Class I Risk 0.4% Risk of Major Cardiac Event (see below) A	3 points Class IV Risk 11% Risk of Major Cardiac Event (see below) B		

Fig. 1.1 Revised Cardiac Risk Index calculator depicted for two patients entered into the risk calculator. Patient A has no risk factors and a calculated risk for major cardiac event equal to 0.4%. Patient B has several risk factors and a calculated risk for major cardiac event equal to 11%. (From <http://www.mdcalc.com/revised-cardiac-risk-index-for-pre-operative-risk/>)

