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Country: **Spain**

Titel of the project: **The "Pulse Week". An information campaign promoting the early diagnosis of atrial fibrillation.**

Project details

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Award amount: €10,000

More than 7,000 individuals will receive a letter containing information about atrial fibrillation together with an invitation to attend a medical consultation for the detection of the arrhythmia consisting in simply having their pulse taken. These consultations will be held during one set week in four health centers in the area of Vigo/Morrazo (Spain).

Atrial fibrillation is present in between 5 and 20% of the elderly population and it is responsible for between a fifth and a quarter of all cerebrovascular accidents (strokes). It is not unusual for these patients not to present any symptoms.

Antithrombotic therapy can drastically reduce the embolic complications of this arrhythmia, which is why early diagnosis is fundamental. Some studies suggest that the careful taking of a pulse has an accuracy of almost 90-95% in the detection of atrial fibrillation. The negative predictive value is close to 99%. Positive diagnosis is lower, at around 70-75%, which is why confirmation via an electrocardiogram (ECG) is necessary. Aims: 1) Increase the level of awareness of atrial fibrillation and its associated risks among our reference population; 2) Attempt to diagnose new cases of atrial fibrillation in a subgroup of candidates as a primary stroke prevention measure by taking their pulse. Methods: A publicity campaign will be conducted based on the distribution of information leaflets and invitations by post to attend a medical consultation in different health centers in urban and semi-urban areas in the Vigo health area. The target population is composed of men and women aged 65 and above without an existing diagnosed case of atrial fibrillation. The campaign will encompass approximately 7,200 individuals: 6,200 as a reference population in 3 health centers in urban and semi-urban areas and 1,000 in the specialized clinic in the reference area. The consultation will consist in analyzing the heart rate by means of taking a pulse and gathering information about vascular risk factors and previous history of cardiovascular disease. The study staff will receive special training in advance in the cardiology department of the reference hospital. The approach will be to take the radial pulse for a minimum of 20 seconds. The rate will be classified into: 1) normal; 2) at least one irregular heartbeat; 3) more than one irregular heartbeat; 4) clearly irregular. Patients with a type 3 or 4 pulse according to this classification will have an ECG with 12 derivations performed on the same morning as the visit. If this confirms atrial fibrillation, a special appointment will be scheduled with their reference doctor. A shared database will be created for all the centers involved for the direct collection of the information during the consultation and the subsequent analysis by the investigating team. This campaign will allow the dissemination of clear information about the risks of atrial fibrillation to our reference population. In addition, the generalized invitation to a consultation in health centers includes the participation of nurses and doctors in the early diagnosis of atrial fibrillation with potential benefits for the primary prevention of strokes.

Audience

Type

- Healthcare professionals
- General public

Location

Spain, Europe