The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of point-of-care tests (CoaguChek system, INRatio2 PT/INR monitor and ProTime Microcoagulation system) for the self-monitoring of the coagulation status of people receiving long-term vitamin K antagonist therapy, compared with standard UK practice: systematic review and economic evaluation

Pawana Sharma,1* Graham Scotland,1,2 Moira Cruickshank,1 Emma Tassie,2 Cynthia Fraser,1 Chris Burton,3 Bernard Croal,4 Craig R Ramsay1 and Miriam Brazzelli1

1Health Services Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK
2Health Economics Research Unit, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK
3Centre of Academic Primary Care, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK
4Department of Clinical Biochemistry, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK

*Corresponding author

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

People with clinical conditions such as atrial fibrillation (irregular heart rhythm) or heart valve disease are required to take lifelong blood-thinning drugs (warfarin or other vitamin K antagonists) known as oral anticoagulation therapy (OAT) to avoid the risks of blood clot (thromboembolism). Over- or underdosing of warfarin can result in serious side effects including bleeding or thromboembolic complications; therefore, treatment with warfarin requires frequent and regular monitoring. Self-monitoring, which is the use of a personal testing machine at home (i.e. point-of-care devices) to test the blood coagulation status (self-testing), or to test the coagulation status and manage the dose at the same time (self-management), is an option for warfarin monitoring. The use of point-of-care tests for self-monitoring may allow regular monitoring to prevent serious adverse events. This appraisal assessed the effects (clinical and economical) of self-monitoring using CoaguChek® S and XS, INRatio2® and ProTime® point-of-care devices, compared with standard clinic monitoring in people receiving long-term OAT. We found 26 trials (reported in 45 papers) in which 8763 patients receiving OAT were randomly assigned to self-monitoring or standard monitoring. Thromboembolic events were reduced in all patients performing self-monitoring. In people with artificial heart valves, self-monitoring almost halved the risk of thromboembolic events and all-cause mortality. There was greater reduction in thromboembolic events and all-cause mortality through self-management but not through self-testing. Self-monitoring with INRatio or CoaguChek XS was found to have ≈ 80% chance of being cost-effective, compared with standard monitoring.
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