

Researcher recommends stronger antithrombotic drugs in high-risk heart attack patients

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The Cardiovascular Research Laboratory of the Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL) led by the cardiologist of the Bellvitge University Hospital José Luis Ferreiro has conducted a study on the effect of antiplatelet drugs given to high risk patients suffering from acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) in the context of the Infarction Code.

The study concludes that when patients arrive to the hospital, in most cases the administered [antiplatelet drugs](#) have not worked yet. Therefore, in high-[risk patients](#), the researchers recommend the use of faster and more potent antithrombotic drugs.

The results of the study have been advanced in the online edition of *Thrombosis and Haemostasis* journal.

Infarction Code

The Infarction Code is an urgent protocol launched by the Catalan [Health Ministry](#) on June 2009 implying that "when it is detected a heart attack at any point of Catalonia on the street, in a regional hospital or wherever", explains Ferreiro, "the patient will be moved immediately to a reference hospital with a hemodynamic unit where a primary [angioplasty](#) will be made, ie unclogging blood vessels causing the heart attack."

"This protocol improves the patient outcome because the sooner you act, the less [heart muscle](#) will be damaged". This fact has led IDIBELL researchers to wonder if antithrombotic drugs administered orally in these cases -aspirin and [clopidogrel](#)- have a fast enough effect to be useful in this context.

Aspirin and clopidogrel

The study, conducted with 50 patients of the Hemodynamics Unit of the Bellvitge University Hospital attended in the Infarction Code, found that only 25% of these patients had responded to aspirin when they arrived to the hospital, and only 10% of them had responded to clopidogrel.

"The use of more potent drugs and especially faster ones would be recommended in cases of acute [high-risk](#), instead of using clopidogrel, and its benefit would offset a possible increased risk of bleeding", explains Jose Luis Ferreiro.

Infarction Code at Bellvitge

The Infarction Code protocol was launched at the Bellvitge University Hospital on June 1 2009, for a reference population of 1.2 million people. Currently, the hospital performs each year about 650 infarction codes, while before its implementation the activity of the Hemodynamics Unit in infarcts was less than 250 cases annually.

Since the implementation of the Infarction Code, in-hospital mortality have decreased from 9.1% to 5.3% within thirty days, and from 13.7% to 8% after one year.

Provided by IDIBELL-Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute

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