

The appropriateness of use of percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty in Spain.

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BACKGROUND: The rapid increase in the number of percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA) procedures performed in Spain in recent years raises questions about how appropriately this procedure is being used. To examine this issue, we studied the appropriateness of use of PTCA in Spanish patients and factors associated with inappropriate use. **METHODS:** We applied criteria for the appropriate use of PTCA developed by an expert panel of Spanish cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons to a random sample of 1913 patients undergoing PTCA in Spain in 1997. The patients were selected through a two-step sampling process, stratifying by hospital type (public/private) and volume of procedures (low/medium/high). We examined the association between inappropriate use of PTCA and different clinical and sociodemographic factors. **RESULTS:** Overall, 46% of the PTCA procedures were appropriate, 31% were uncertain and 22% were inappropriate. Two factors contributing to inappropriate use were patients' receipt of less than optimal medical therapy and their failure to undergo stress testing. Institutional type and volume of procedures were not significantly related with inappropriate use. **CONCLUSIONS:** One of every five PTCA procedures in Spain is done for inappropriate reasons. Assuring that patients receive optimal medical therapy and undergo stress testing when indicated could contribute to more appropriate use of PTCA.

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