Effective Health Care

Treatment of Acute Stroke
Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Treatment of acute stroke is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available at this time and inability to contact the nominator for assistance reframing the question. However, the topic of mechanical clot removal for acute stroke will be considered for a potential technical brief by the Effective Health Care (EHC) Program.
- To see a description of a technical brief, please go to http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/research-for-policymakers-researchers-and-others/.
- If this topic is developed into a technical brief, key questions will be drafted and posted on the AHRQ Web site. To sign up for notification when this and other EHC Program topics are posted, please go to http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/.

Topic Description

Nominator: National non-governmental advisory group

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the comparative effectiveness of clot removal devices and reperfusion drugs for the treatment of acute stroke.

Key Questions from Nominator: None

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/.)
- Directly comparing mechanical clot removal with medical reperfusion does not appear to be feasible given that they have different clinical indications. t-PA (a reperfusion drug) is approved for use within the first 3 hours after an ischemic stroke, with limited data supporting its use up to 4.5 hours after stroke and data showing serious adverse events associated with its use more than 6 hours after onset. The Merci device (a clot removal device) is FDA approved for use after either t-PA treatment failure or the time window for t-PA use is exceeded.

- Given the lack of direct comparative evidence and inability to contact the original nominator for assistance reframing the question, a full systematic review is not possible. However the topic triage process revealed that there is stakeholder interest in mechanical clot removal devices, although the evidence base may not be sufficient for a full review. Therefore a potential technical brief focused only on devices will be considered. Such a technical brief could also examine the effects of rapidly diffusing and changing devices on comparative effectiveness research.