

A multicentre observational study on management of general anaesthesia in elderly patients
at high risk of postoperative adverse outcomes

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Declaration of interest

S Molliex has received consulting fees, payments and travel funding for lectures from Baxter SA.

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Y. Le Manach is a consultant and has received travel funding for lectures from Edwards SA.

Appendix: Contributors of the Opti-aged Group (n= 84)

The Opti-aged group was formed of investigators issued from 28 French Anaesthesia and Critical Care Departments participating to the Opti-Aged study, a stepped wedge cluster randomized controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of an optimization strategy for general anaesthesia on postoperative morbidity and mortality in elderly patients (ClinicalTrial.gov registration number: NCT02668250).

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Abstract

Introduction: in elderly patients, goal directed haemodynamic therapy (GDHT), depth of anaesthesia monitoring and lung-protective ventilation have been shown to improve postoperative outcomes. The aim of this study was to evaluate current practices concerning strategies of anaesthesia optimisation in patients aged ≥ 75 years.

Patients and methods: a multicentre observational study was performed from February to May 2015 in 23 French academic centres. On 30 consecutive days in each centre, patients ≥ 75 years with at least one major co-morbidity undergoing elective or emergency procedures (femoral-neck fractures surgery, intraperitoneal abdominal surgery or vascular surgery) were included. Patient characteristics and data related to GHDT, management of hypotension, monitoring of temperature and depth of anaesthesia, lung ventilation, point of care haemoglobin testing were collected.

Results: 807 patients were included. Only 2 % of patients [95% CI: 1-3] received GHDT in full accordance with guidelines. Depth of anaesthesia monitoring was largely performed (53%, [95% CI: 50-56]). The multifaceted strategy of lung-protective ventilation combining low tidal volumes (6-8ml/kg), PEEP of 5-8 cm cmH₂O, and repeated recruitment manoeuvres, was

performed in only 4 % [95% CI: 3-5] of patients. A centre effect was a major determinant of variation concerning implementation of these strategies.

Discussion: in patients' ≥ 75 years, strategies of anaesthesia optimisation are not in accordance with eligible guidelines. Implementation of these techniques varies independently of factors related to the patient or the type of surgery and may be dependent on the generated constraints.

Keywords: Aged; Anaesthesia management: monitoring; Haemodynamic; Ventilation

Introduction

Elderly patients constitute an increasingly large proportion of high surgical risk patients. Their management in major surgery is associated with significant postoperative morbidity and mortality. Postoperative deaths in patients over 70 years represent 80 % of the overall postoperative mortality in the UK [1]. In high-risk surgical patients, several studies have demonstrated that goal directed haemodynamic therapy (GHDT) significantly reduced postoperative mortality and morbidity [2,3], and that a combination of excessive depth of anaesthesia measured by bispectral index, hypotension and low anaesthesia requirement resulted in increased mortality [4,5]. Guidance from NICE [6,7] have mandated the use of cardiac output monitoring and depth of anaesthesia monitoring in patients at higher risks of adverse outcomes in an attempt to improve their outcomes. The use of these two monitoring is thus recommended in aged patients alongside a conventional monitoring including pulse oximetry, capnography, ECG and blood pressure and core temperature monitoring [8,9]. Lung-protective ventilation strategy was also associated with improved postoperative outcomes in patients at risk of pulmonary complications that include elderly patients [10, 11]. Combining these strategies optimising anaesthesia could reduce the build-up of oxygen debt and act synergistically to decrease postoperative morbidity. Additional monitoring and related strategies of anaesthesia optimisation are not used as frequently as they should be in the elderly patient's population [12]. The present study involving 23 French academic centres was aimed at assessing the current practice concerning monitoring and intraoperative strategies of general anaesthesia optimisation in patient's ≥ 75 years at high risk of adverse outcomes, and determining factors associated with their use.

Patients and Methods

This prospective study was approved by the Comité de Protection des Personnes Sud-Est 6 of the Clermont-Ferrand University Hospital (ref 2015/CE11) and was performed from February to May 2015 in 23 academic centres regrouping 28 anaesthesia departments (Appendix : Opti-aged group contributors). Due to the observational nature of the study, informed consent was waived according to the French law, but all patients were informed about the study and had the opportunity to refuse to participate. On 30 consecutive days in each department, all the patients aged ≥ 75 years undergoing elective or emergency femoral-neck fractures surgery, intraperitoneal abdominal surgery (excluding cholecystectomy, abdominal wall surgery and minor surgery), or vascular surgery (excluding arterio-venous fistula and venous surgery) were included.

The surgical procedures were selected following analysis of the 2010 French Hospital Discharge database (PMSI) which contains medical procedures for all patients admitted to public and private hospitals in 2010, identified by their code according to medical classification for clinical procedures and discharge diagnoses encoded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10 codes). These procedures were chosen because they were associated with a 24.0 % [95% CI: 23.7-24.4] incidence of a composite criteria combining 30-day major postoperative complications (acute kidney injury, acute myocardial infarction, heart failure, stroke, severe sepsis, septic shock, acute respiratory failure requiring non-invasive ventilation or intubation, delirium) and mortality in patients aged ≥ 75 years having at least one comorbidity among the following: ischaemic coronary disease, cardiac arrhythmia, congestive heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, dementia,

stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic respiratory failure, chronic alcohol abuse, active cancer, diabetes, chronic renal failure.

All participants were included from induction of anaesthesia to the end of surgery and received general anaesthesia. The study had an online application for collecting and managing data on patients recruited. The physicians had to fill an electronic case report form (eCRF) with the following patient variables: age (≥ 75 or ≥ 80 years), ASA score (I, II, III, IV, V), comorbidities (ischemic coronary disease, cardiac arrhythmia, congestive heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, dementia, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic respiratory failure, chronic alcohol abuse, active cancer, diabetes), type (femoral-neck fracture surgery, intraperitoneal abdominal surgery, vascular surgery) and nature (elective, emergency) of the surgery. Data collected are shown in Table 1. Data were collected as yes or no responses except for temperature at the end of surgery, value of blood pressure defining hypotension, tidal volume and PEEP level where quantitative parameters were required.

For a rate of adhesion to the recommendations expected between 20% and 50%, inclusion of 800 patients allows to evaluate the rate of adhesion ($\alpha = 5\%$ $1-\beta = 80\%$) with a margin of error of 3,5%.

Statistical analysis was performed using Stata 13 software (StataCorp LP, College Station, TX, US). The tests were two-sided, with a type I error set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Subject's characteristics were presented as median [range] for continuous data (assumption of normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test) and as the number of patients and associated percentages with 95%CI for categorical parameters. Comparisons between the independent groups were performed using the chi-squared or Fisher's exact tests for categorical

variables, and using Student t-test or Mann-Whitney test for quantitative parameters (normality, assumption of homoscedasticity studied using Fisher-Snedecor test). As proposed by some statisticians, we chose to report all the individual p-values without applying any mathematical correction for distinct tests comparing groups. Specific attention was given to the magnitude of improvement and to clinical relevance. Multivariate analysis was performed using generalized linear mixed model (with logit link function for dichotomous dependent outcome). The covariates, considered as fixed effects, were retained according to univariate results and to their clinical relevance. The centre effect has been considered as random-effect in order to take into account between and within centre variability. Indeed, observations from the same centre (cluster) could be usually considered more similar to each other than observations from different centres. The intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC), ratio of the between-centre variance to the total variance, could be seen as the proportion of the total variance of dependent outcome that is accounted for by the clustering centre effect. It could also be interpreted as the correlation among observations within the same centre. Results were expressed by intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) and using forest-plots presenting risk-ratios and 95% confidence intervals. As less than 5% of data were missing for each variable of interest, handling of missing data was not applied.

Results

During the study period from February 1, 2015 and through May 31, 2015 a total of 1013 patients were screened for eligibility in the study and 807 were ultimately included. One hundred and forty six patients did not meet comorbidity inclusion criteria, 37 and 23

patients, those of age and type of surgery respectively. Patients' characteristics are shown in Table 2. Patients were mainly high-risk patients (71% ASA \geq III), having elective surgery (59%) equally distributed among the 3 types of surgery. Cardiovascular comorbidity was the most frequently observed (62% of patients).

A protocol-based treatment of hypotension was used in 63 % [95%CI: 60-66] of the patients (Fig 1 [A, B]). IOH was predominantly defined as a decrease of mean blood pressure (51%, [95% CI: 48-54]), below a certain absolute threshold (72 %, [95% CI: 69-75]). The median of this threshold (range) was 70 (50-90) mmHg. When a decrease in blood pressure relative to the patients' baseline mean blood pressure was reported, the median drop (range) was 30 (10-30) %. When IOH definition was based on systolic blood pressure, the median threshold (range) and the median drop (range) were respectively of 100 (80-150) mmHg and 20 (10-30) %. The vasopressor mainly used to treat hypotension was ephedrine in 43% [95% CI: 40-47] of cases. Vascular surgery (RR [95%CI]: 4.82 [2.40-9.66] $p < 0.001$) and intraperitoneal abdominal surgery (RR [95%CI]: 2.39 [1.35-4.23] $p = 0.003$) were the 2 determinants associated with the existence of a protocol-based treatment of hypotension within the same centre (Fig 2).

Cardiac output or stroke volume (SV) monitoring was used in 10 % [95% CI: 8-12] of patients (Fig [1 A, C]). The research of SV plateau value by initial fluid challenge was performed in 25% [95% CI: 15-34] of monitored patients. Moreover, one in two patients did not benefit of intraoperative SV optimisation with fluid. Finally, fourteen patients received goal directed therapy (GDT) fully respecting the NICE and the French Society of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine (SFAR) published algorithms. Intraperitoneal abdominal surgery (RR [95%CI]:

3.07 [1.39-6.79] $p=0.006$) was associated with stroke volume monitoring within the same centre (Fig 2).

EEG depth of anaesthesia monitoring was performed in 53% of patients [95% CI: 50-56]. (Fig 1 [A, D]). In the majority of cases (85% [95% CI: 83-89]) a 40-60 index objective was observed. Maintenance of anaesthesia was started when BIS index or SE entropy index was higher than a threshold value in only 25 % [95% CI: 21-29] of monitored patients. The suppression ratio (RS) or burst suppression ratio (BSR) was monitored in 23% [95% CI: 19-27] of cases. Intraperitoneal abdominal surgery (RR [95%CI]: 1.80 [1.09-2.97] $p=0.021$), emergency procedures (RR [95%CI]: 1.65 [1.05-2.60] $p=0.028$) were associated with EEG depth of anaesthesia monitoring within the same centre (Fig 2).

Tidal volume was mainly chosen on the basis of predicted ideal body weight (74% [95% CI: 71-77]), the median tidal volume (range) was 7(5-10) ml/kg (Fig 1 [A, E]). When tidal volume used actual body weight, the median tidal volume was also 7(5-10) ml/kg. Thirty-six patients (4%) underwent recruitment manoeuvres after induction of anaesthesia and every 30 min during surgery. PEEP was used in most cases (94% [95% CI: 92-96]). The median (range) PEEP was 5 (2-12) cmH₂O. PEEP was < 5 cmH₂O in 175 patients (22%). Multifaceted strategy of protective-lung ventilation that combined low tidal volumes (6-8ml/kg of ideal predicted body weight), a PEEP of 5-8 cm cmH₂O and recruitment manoeuvre repeated every 30 min after tracheal intubation (9) was performed in only 33 patients (4% [95% CI: 3-5]). No factor related to the patients or the type of surgery was associated with the completion of a recruitment manoeuvre within the same centre (Fig 2).

Temperature was monitored in 70% [95% CI: 67-73] of patients. Median temperature (range) was 36.2° [32.6°- 38.3°] at the end of surgery. Intraperitoneal abdominal surgery (RR

[95%CI]: 3.11 [1.62-5.96] $p=0.001$) and cardiovascular comorbidities (RR [95%CI]: 0.35 [0.16-0.76] $p=0.008$) were the two factors influencing the use of temperature monitoring within the same centre (Fig 2).

A point of care haemoglobin testing was performed in 347 patients (43%) representing 51%, 45% and 31% of patients undergoing femoral neck fractures, intraperitoneal and vascular surgery respectively. Ninety-eight patients received intraoperative red blood cells transfusion (12%) [femoral neck surgery: $n= 32$ (12%); intraperitoneal abdominal surgery: $n= 37$ (12%); vascular surgery : $n= 29$ (12%)]. The thresholds of haemoglobin considered for transfusion were between 70g/l and 100g/l (Table 3). In 46 patients over 98 (47%) receiving RBC transfusion in the absence of ischemic coronary disease, the threshold of transfusion used was higher than recommended by the NICE and the French Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS) guidelines [13,14].

Regardless of the monitoring and the related optimisation strategies of anaesthesia, the high values of ICC coefficient between 0.24 and 0.45 demonstrated that the centre effect was a major determinant of variation concerning implementation of these techniques and strategies in elderly patients (Fig 3).

Discussion

The main findings of this study are that in elderly patients with high risk of major postoperative complications, monitoring and related strategies of general anaesthesia optimisation are not in accordance with eligible guidelines and evidence, and that the implementation of these techniques varies greatly from one centre to another, independently of factors related to the patient co-morbidities or the type of surgery but appears related to the constraint generated.

Haemodynamic monitoring and management in elderly patients had the low compliance rate with guidelines. Only 1.7 % of patients received GDHT in full accordance with the algorithm recommended by the SFAR or ESA guidelines [15, 16]. Results can be explained by several reasons [17]. Physicians can consider that monitoring cardiac output remains too invasive in many cases, despite available technologies with minimal invasiveness that may facilitate its clinical implementation [18]. They may prefer the use of dynamic predictors of fluid responsiveness as surrogate of cardiac output. Recent evidence also suggests that GDT is not bringing the added benefit to the care of surgical high-risk patients that was previously described [19-21], specifically in patients undergoing hip fracture surgery [22]. The rate of adhesion to the recommendations may also be related to the lack of strong level of evidence in elderly patients. The validation of SV-based algorithms in this population where the high incidence of diastolic dysfunction means the ability to increase SV is limited [22], needs to be addressed. Goal directed haemodynamic therapy also requires frequent assessment of fluid responsiveness, and may increase provider workload in the busy operating room environment limiting its implementation in clinical practice. The lack of education on how to use the devices may add an additional barrier to their use and the cost of these devices may

be a burden for the implementation of Goal Directed Therapy concepts. Finally, a limited access to monitors may also contribute to our results as suggested in a survey amongst North American and European anaesthesiologists [18]. In addition, more than a third of patients did not benefit from a protocol-based treatment of hypotension. However, this did not prejudice that hypotension was not rapidly treated by the anaesthetist during surgery. Our results confirm that there is no accepted single definition for IOH due to the absence of a solid evidence-based threshold value at which to treat low blood pressures [23]. It is nevertheless surprising that the existence of a protocol-based treatment of IOH was only related to the type of surgery and not to the patient's cardiovascular comorbidities. Management targeting an individualised blood pressure in patients who were at increased postoperative risk reduced the risk of postoperative organ dysfunction in a recently published study [24].

Depth of anaesthesia was monitored in 53% of patients although the causal relationship between low processed EEG values and poor outcomes is lacking [25-27]. The relatively frequent use of depth of anaesthesia monitoring in elderly patients may be related to that the fact that increased age did not change the BIS index associated with clinical endpoints for sedation [28], while the influence of aging on pharmacology is an important factor in determining anaesthetic requirements. During general anaesthesia, a suppression ratio (RS or BSR) >0 is mainly produced by unnecessarily deep anaesthesia excepting cases of severe hypothermia and rare cerebral ischemic insults [29]. It is thus an intriguing finding of our study that this ratio was only monitored in 23% of patients where BIS or entropy was used. In accordance with NICE and NHS recommendations, high risk surgery represented by the emergency procedures was found to be an independent factor associated with depth of anaesthesia monitoring.

A strategy of low tidal volume ventilation was used in a majority of patients with a 5 cm H₂O median PEEP value. Twenty-two percent of patients received a low level of PEEP (< 5 cm H₂O). The optimum level of positive PEEP for prophylactic lung-protective ventilation is unknown [30] but the use of low levels of PEEP may lead to atelectasis by promoting repeated opening and closing of small airways [31] and could be harmful in some patients. In a study of 29 343 patients who underwent general anaesthesia with mechanical ventilation, the use of low tidal volume (6-8 ml Kg⁻¹ IBW) and minimum levels of PEEP was associated with an increased risk of 30-day mortality [32]. Moreover, alveolar recruitment manoeuvres are mandatory to fully open collapsed alveoli, while PEEP is needed to prevent further collapse. In our study, only 4% of patients underwent adherence to the multifaceted strategy of protective-lung ventilation associated with improved clinical outcomes in intermediate- and high-risk patients [10, 11]. The recruitment manoeuvres that represent the binding part of this strategy were rarely performed and repeated, whereas the setting a low tidal volume with a peep was a more common practice. This can also be related to the lack of standardisation in the way the recruitment manoeuvres are performed [11]. Questions also remains concerning the effective recruitment pressures and the minimal duration required for these inspiratory pressures to recruit the collapsed lungs of most patients under general anaesthesia, as well as regarding the safety of these manoeuvres [11].

Our results are in agreement with previously published surveys concerning haemodynamic management and monitoring suggesting a gap between evidence about the benefits of perioperative haemodynamic optimisation and the clinical practice [18, 33-34]. According to our results, in a recent large and retrospective cohort, the use of protective intraoperative mechanical ventilation was driven by the individual preference/practice of the anaesthesia

provider, rather than patient and/or procedural characteristics [35]. The mean probability of administering protective ventilation was 53.8% in the latter study but protective ventilation definition included a median positive end-expiratory pressure of 5 cm H₂O or more, tidal volume of <10 mL/kg of predicted body weight and plateau pressure of <30 cm H₂O but no recruitment manoeuvres [35]. Concerning depth of anaesthesia monitoring, in retrospectively collected intraoperative data on 55,210 surgical cases at a tertiary care hospital, factors associated with BIS[®] use included: increased age, greater ASA physical status, extremes of Body Mass Index (BMI), use of intravenous anaesthetics, use of long-acting paralytic agent, use of an endotracheal tube, emergency surgery, increasing length of case, an certain type of surgery [36]. In our study, age and ASA physical status were not factors associated with the use of depth of anaesthesia monitoring because only aged patients ≥ 75 years with at least one comorbidity (ASA ≥ 2) were included.

The present study has several limitations. First, the study was declarative and exposed to a non-response bias and to the Hawthorne effect. The latter may have led to an overestimation of the use of additional monitoring and related strategies for optimizing anaesthesia. The lack of consensus about application of certain guidelines to the elderly or to the type of surgical procedures included in our study may also be discussed. Our study was not designed to evaluate postoperative patient outcomes and the effect of each recommendation could affect patient outcomes in different ways. Our cross sectional evaluation was mainly focused on 4 approaches (Blood pressure management, GDHT, depth of anaesthesia monitoring and protective ventilation) whose common pathophysiology is to prevent or reduce the build-up of intraoperative oxygen debt. However, the benefit of this multimodal monitoring on post-operative morbidity and mortality has not been reported. This study was performed exclusively in University hospitals where many high-risk surgeries

are achieved in elderly, and monitoring devices are supposed to be more frequently available. Thus, the generalizability of our results can be reasonably considered.

Conclusion

These results demonstrate a considerable gap between clinical practice and guidelines concerning anaesthetic optimisation in elderly patients at increased postoperative risk. In addition, clinical practice is heavily influenced by local factors that may not be justified by the recently published evidence. We postulate that implementation of a multimodal strategy of anaesthesia optimisation is mainly dependent of the constraints generated. Closed-loop automation of anaesthetics and fluid administration, as well as the automation of alveolar recruitment by the ventilator may represent an interesting approach in this context. The benefit of such multimodal optimisation strategy has to be addressed in elderly patients.

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Table 1: Parameters of optimisation strategy of general anaesthesia, and related guidelines or references.

Parameters		Guidelines or references (reference)
<p>Blood pressure monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protocol-based treatment for intraoperative hypotension - type of threshold value defining hypotension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - systolic arterial pressure - mean arterial pressure - definition of threshold value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absolute - relative - threshold value - type of vasopressor used to treat hypotension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ephedrine - phenylephrine -noradrenaline 		(8,9)
<p>Monitoring of stroke volume (SV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - type of monitor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - esophageal Doppler - pulse contour analysis -other - research of SV plateau value by initial fluid challenge - intraoperative fluid challenge when SV reduction > 10% 		(6, 8, 15, 16)
<p>EEG depth of anaesthesia monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - type of monitor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BIS® - Entropy® - other - 40-60 target objective - threshold value to start maintenance of anaesthesia - suppression ratio (SR) or burst suppression ratio (BSR) monitoring 		(7,8,9)
<p>Lung protective ventilation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tidal volume (ml/kg) - tidal volume based on ideal predicted body weight - recruitment manoeuvres immediately applied after intubation - intraoperative recruitment manoeuvres - inspired oxygen fraction (FiO₂) < 50% - PEEP level (cmH₂O) 		(10-11, 30)
<p>Haemoglobin (Hb) testing and transfusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - point of care haemoglobin testing - blood transfusion - red blood cells (RBC) transfusion threshold 		(13, 14)
<p>Temperature monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -temperature at the end of surgery 		(8,9)

Table 2: Patients characteristics. Data are expressed as number (percentage of patients included in the study).

	Number of patients (%)
Age	
75-79	254 (31)
≥80	553 (69)
ASA score	
II	208 (29)
III	456 (63)
IV	57 (8)
V	1 (0)
Type of surgery	
Femoral neck fracture	260 (32)
Intraperitoneal abdominal	301 (38)
Vascular	241 (30)
Nature of surgery	
Elective	443 (59)
Emergency	306 (41)
Comorbidities	
Ischemic coronary disease	203 (25)
Cardiac arrhythmia	273 (34)
Congestive heart failure	136 (17)
Peripheral vascular disease	204 (25)
Dementia	162 (20)
Stroke	145 (18)
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	100 (12)
Chronic respiratory failure	51 (6)
Chronic alcohol abuse	23 (3)
Active cancer	181 (22)
Diabetes	184 (23)

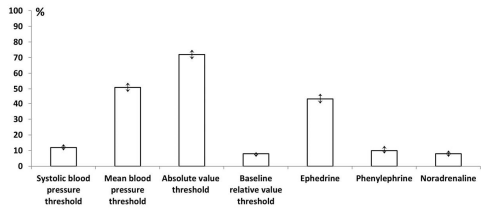
Table 3: Thresholds of haemoglobin for red blood cells (RBC) transfusion and absence of cardiovascular comorbidities. Data are expressed as number [percentage of patients receiving RBC].

Threshold of haemoglobin (g/l)	Patients transfused (n) [% of patients receiving RBC]	No ischemic coronary disease comorbidity (n)	No cardiovascular comorbidities (n)
10	39 [40]	23	10
9	31 [32]	15	7
8	22 [22]	8	5
7	6 [6]	0	0

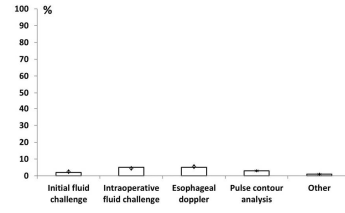
Figure 1: Monitoring and related optimisation strategies of anaesthesia. Data are expressed as percentage of patients included in the study. A: different parameters of optimisation strategies; B: protocol-based treatment of hypotension; C: cardiac output (CO) or stroke volume (SV) monitoring; D: Depth of anaesthesia monitoring, SE: state entropy, SR: suppression ratio, BSR: burst suppression ratio; E: protective ventilation. The 95% confidence interval of the percentage is plotted by arrows.

Figure 2: Factors associated with monitoring and intraoperative strategies of optimisation of general anaesthesia.

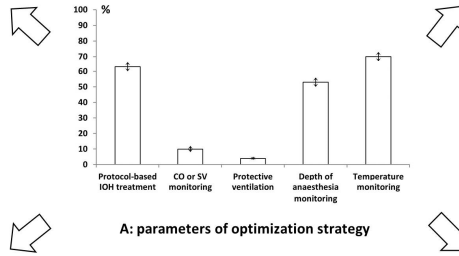
Figure 3: Intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC), ratio of the between-centre variance to the total variance for each parameter of optimisation strategies. It could be seen as the proportion of the total variance of dependent outcome that is accounted for by the clustering centre effect.



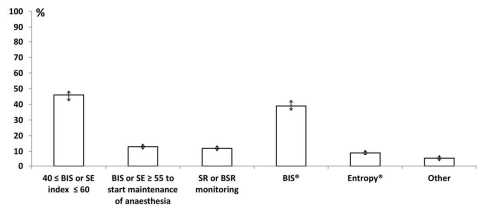
B: protocol-based treatment of hypotension



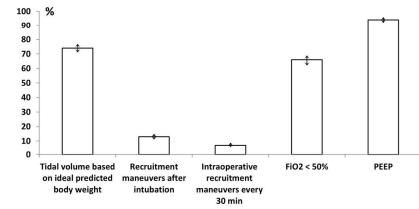
C: cardiac output or stroke volume monitoring



A: parameters of optimization strategy

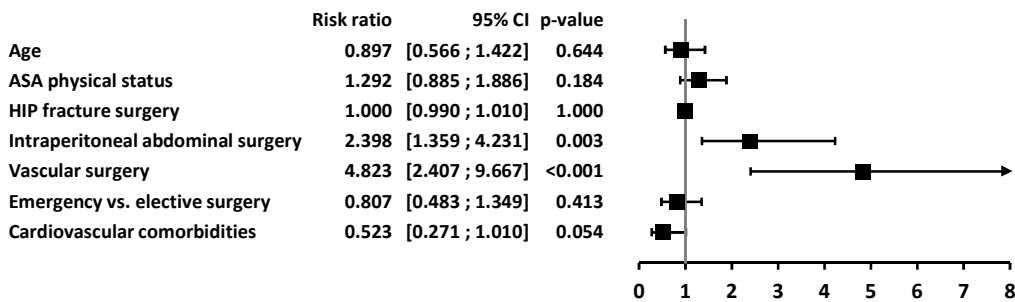


D: depth of anaesthesia monitoring

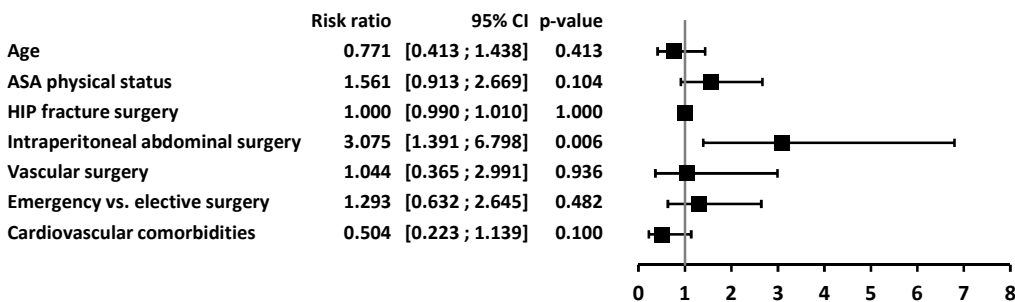


E: protective ventilation

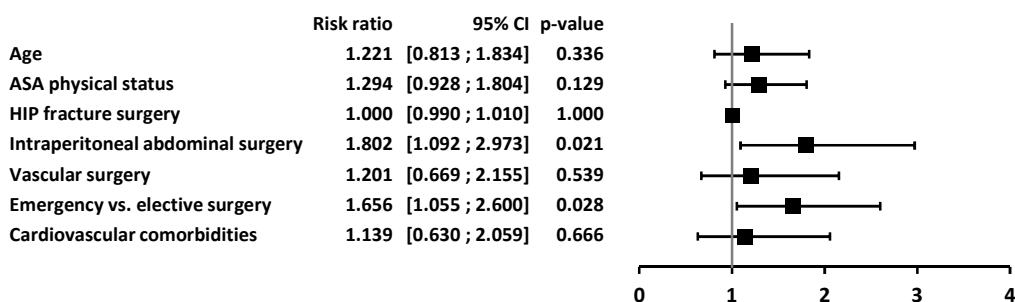
Protocol-based treatment of hypotension.



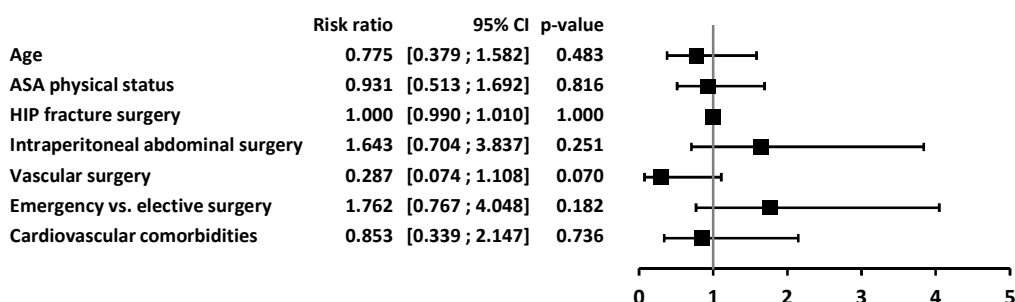
Stroke volume monitoring



EEG depth of anaesthesia monitoring.



Intraoperative recruitment maneuvers.



Temperature monitoring.

