



Letter to the Editor

## Non-adherence of NOACs therapy as a serious phenomenon in patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation in China

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Dear Editor,

We have read with interest the recent study by Eliana Ferroni and colleagues [1]. Their large-sample population-based retrospective cohort study showed that 72.9% patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (NVAF) in Italy were persistence to the non-VKA oral anticoagulants (NOACs) after one year, which was similar with data from other western countries [2].

Stroke prevention with oral anticoagulation is the cornerstone therapy to the management of NVAF. NOACs relatively improve the efficiency, safety and convenience compared with the traditional warfarin. However, Chinese patients with NVAF at high stroke risk had the lowest anticoagulation use compared with western countries or other Asian countries [3]. Moreover, non-adherence of long-term NOACs therapy is very serious in China. Result from a cohort study in Guangzhou, an area at a high economic level in China, showed that only 35% of patients continued NOACs therapy for more than one year [4]. In our statistical analysis, 281 patients with NVAF taking NOACs from January 2017 to February 2018 in Urumqi, an area in western

China, were followed up by telephone. Of these, 48.4% cases discontinued NOACs use in 1-year follow-up.

There are some strategies for the current problem. First, identifying particular characteristics of patients with poor persistence could help maintaining their therapy. Second, more education of doctors in primary medical institutions should be enhanced and to supervise oral anticoagulation use of patients. We believe the increasingly continuing uptake of NOACs use would reduce the health care burden of stroke caused by NVAF in China.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

All authors report no conflict of interest.

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