

Cardiovascular Assessment in the Pre-operative Admission Clinic

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A number of elective patients who have an intermediate risk of cardiovascular complications may benefit from cardiac investigation and optimisation by a Cardiologist pre-operatively. The majority of our elective patients (99%) are seen in a pre-operative assessment clinic (POAC) prior to their operation date and so this is a prime opportunity to identify these patients.

The American College of Cardiology with the American Heart Association have prepared practice guidelines that provide a framework for evaluating a patient's cardiac risk¹, updated in 2002². The goal is to identify appropriate intervention and treatment, in order to optimise the patient pre-operatively, including a step-wise approach to make the decision whether to refer to Cardiology.

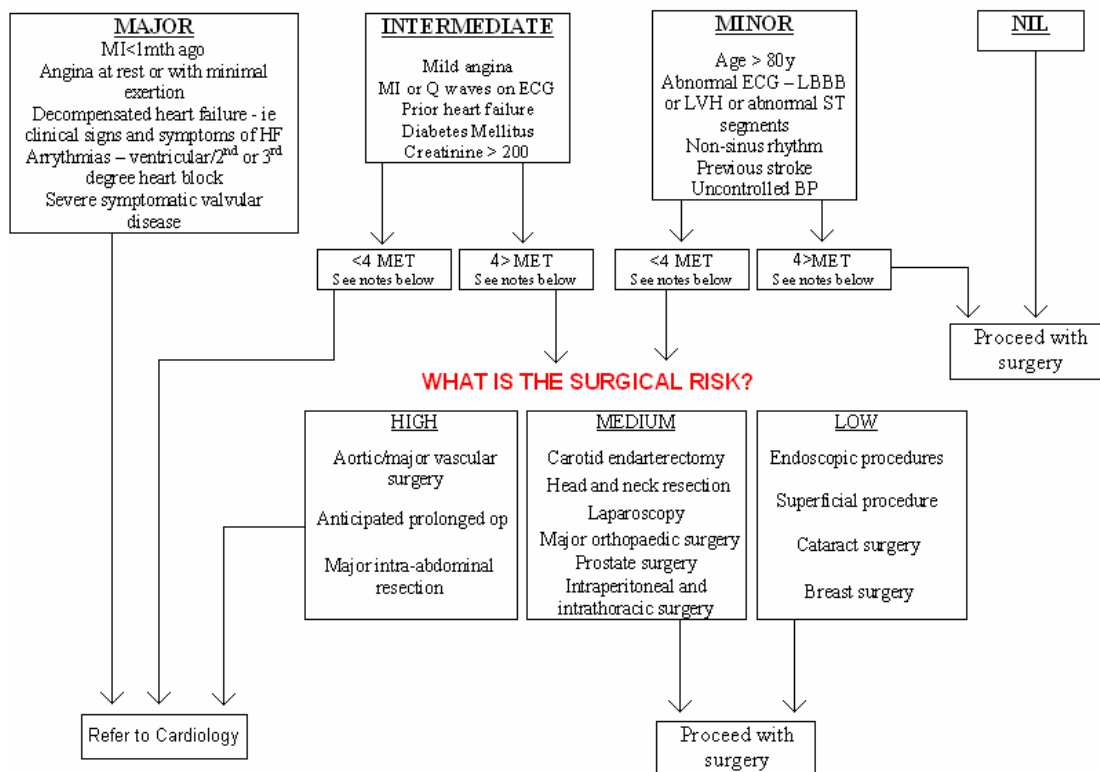


Figure one. Adaptation of guidelines used for audit process.

We audited patients seen in POAC during a four-week period using the guidelines in figure one. 6% of the patient population fulfilled the criteria for referral to Cardiology pre-operatively. Thirty patients fell into the intermediate risk category. The guidelines could be used by medical practitioners assessing the patients preoperatively, as a framework for deciding on further cardiac management.

¹ Eagle KA, Brundage BH, Chairman BR et al. Guidelines for Perioperative cardiovascular evaluation for non-cardiac surgery. Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. Committee on Perioperative Cardiovascular Evaluation for Non-cardiac Surgery. *Circulation*. 1996;**93**:1278-1317.

² Update in *Circulation*, 2002; 105:1257-1267