Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms in Women

Rebecka Hultgren ¹ Emma Larsson ¹ Fredrik Granath ² Jesper Swedenborg ¹

¹ Department of Vascular Surgery, Karolinska Institutet, Karolinska University Hospital, Stockholm. Sweden
² Department for Medical Statistics, Karolinska Institutet, Karolinska University Hospital, Stockholm. Sweden

Background: Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a common and potentially lethal condition due to rupture. It is 4-6 times more common in men. A different distribution of risk factors possibly contributes to this difference. Women have a higher mean age when treated, are more often rejected for surgery and possibly have poorer postoperative results.

Aim: To identify the number of interventions and mortality for women and men treated for ruptured and non ruptured AAA in Sweden.

Method: All patients treated for AAA 1987-2002 were identified in the registries of the National Board of Health and Welfare. Age, sex, diagnosis, surgical procedure and short and long term mortality were extracted.

Results: 10302 men and 1961 women were identified. 47 persons/one million inhabitants were treated 1987 compared to 105 in 2002. 8193 were treated for non-ruptured and 4070 for ruptured AAA. Standardised mortality rates were significantly higher for women compared to men (2.96 vs 1.94), a difference explained by higher mortality from cardiovascular causes. 30 % of all women were treated for ruptured aneurysms compared to 33 % men (p<0.001). Thirty day mortality rates were equal for women and men (17.1 % vs 16.7).

Conclusion: A growing number in the population are treated. Comparison of reported prevalence rates with the number of treated, indicates that too few women are treated. Women do not have a higher postoperative mortality but those surviving surgery have a higher mortality rate than the control population, a difference which is less profound for men with AAA.