

Engaging Pharmacists in Atrial Fibrillation Care



Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is the most prevalent form of irregular heartbeat. It is projected to impact approximately 12.1 million adults in the United States by 2030. AFib results from abnormal electrical impulses causing a portion of the heart to quiver or fibrillate, often leading to complications and up to a fivefold increased risk of stroke.

To ensure optimal care for all AFib patients, the American Heart Association is embarking on a new initiative to educate and involve pharmacists, a crucial yet often overlooked group in AFib care. This initiative, part of the Association's broader Four Fs of Atrial Fibrillation campaign supported by the Bristol Myers Squibb-Pfizer Alliance, will run until June 2025.

The Four Fs focus on patient concerns hindering guideline-directed anticoagulant therapy, such as fear of falling, fear of bleeding, forgetfulness or cognitive dysfunction, and frailty. Pharmacists are frequently excluded from decision-making discussions concerning AFib patients throughout their care journey. In this phase of the initiative, the Association plans to gather pharmacists in a roundtable event to pinpoint gaps and opportunities in AFib care. The insights will be disseminated nationally to thousands of hospitals and outpatient clinics.

"Pharmacists play a vital role in the multidisciplinary team dedicated to optimising care for individuals with atrial fibrillation," stated Cody Parsons, APh, PharmD, BCCCP, manager of clinical operations for Stanford Health Care's cardiovascular health service line. "Their expertise in assessing medical complexity and managing multiple medications is crucial in ensuring safe and effective anticoagulation, ultimately preventing the life-altering consequences of AFib."

AFib often goes undetected until a physical examination, though some individuals may experience symptoms like fatigue, rapid and irregular heartbeat, or other discomfort. Despite the scientific support for anticoagulant therapy in reducing stroke risk, many patients remain untreated or undertreated.

This initiative represents the latest endeavour by the American Heart Association, a leading voluntary organisation dedicated to heart and brain health. This year, the American Heart Association celebrates a century of lifesaving service. Its goal remains to advance health and hope for everyone everywhere.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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