Quality Improvement Conference



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Problem Statement

- Atrial fibrillation (AF), a common heart arrythmia, is associated with an approximately fivefold increased risk for ischemic stroke. Treatment with anticoagulation reduces the risk of stroke by 64% and death by 26%.
- AHA/ACC/HRS Guideline for the Management of Patients with AF in 2014 and 2019 showed no evidence for anti-platelet therapy and recommends NOACs (novel oral anticoagulants) over warfarin for eligible patients in the treatment of AF.
- Out of 1041 patients with AF eligible for NOAC seen in Yishun Polyclinic over a 6- month period (April-September 2022), 262 patients (25%) were not on anticoagulation, 117 were on Aspirin and/or Clopidogrel and 145 patients were not on any therapy.

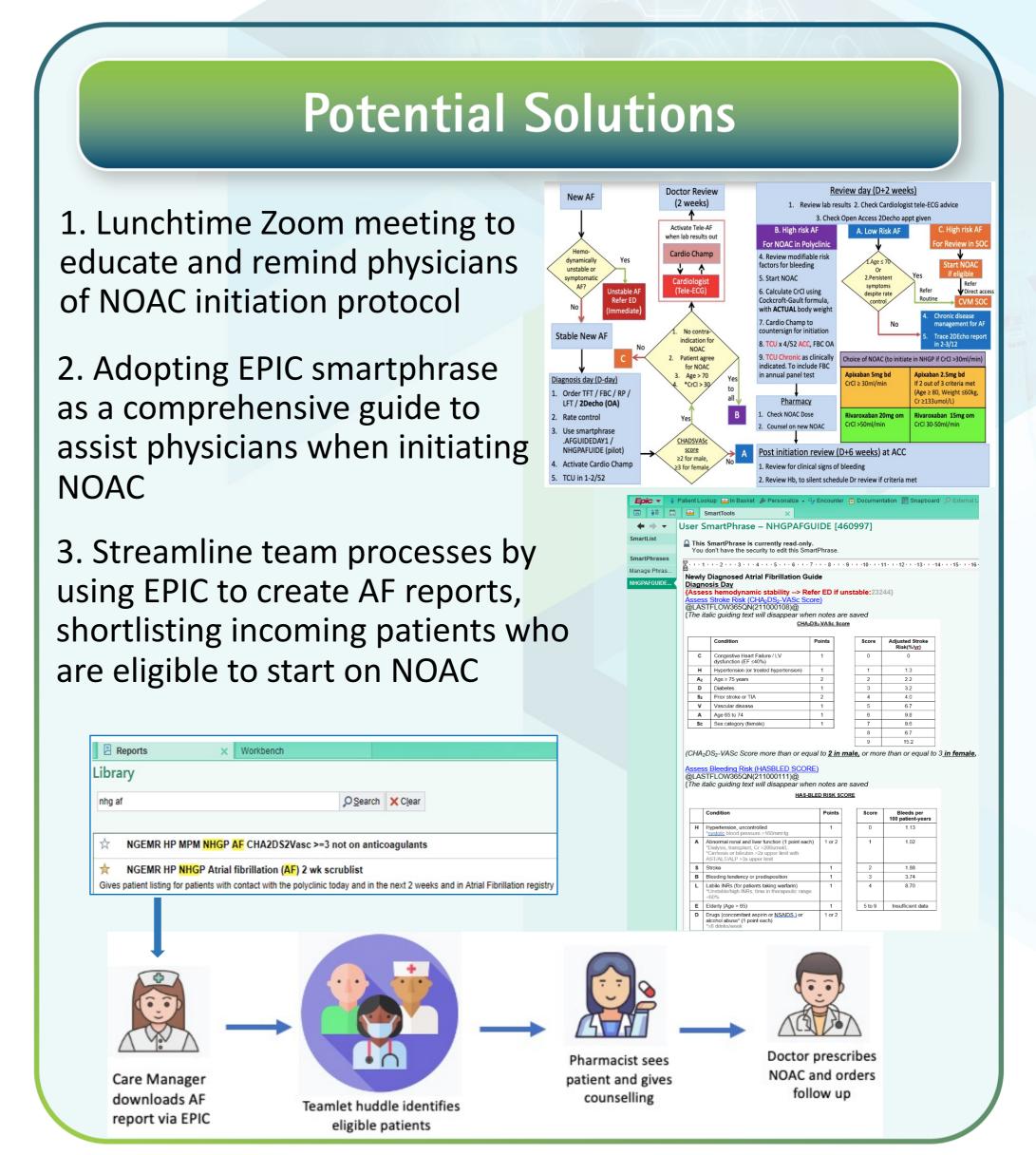
Project Aim

To optimize anticoagulation* in eligible patients diagnosed with Atrial fibrillation in Yishun Polyclinic from 75% to 100% by the next 6 months.

* Initiating NOAC for patients who are not on any treatment or on anti-platelet therapy only

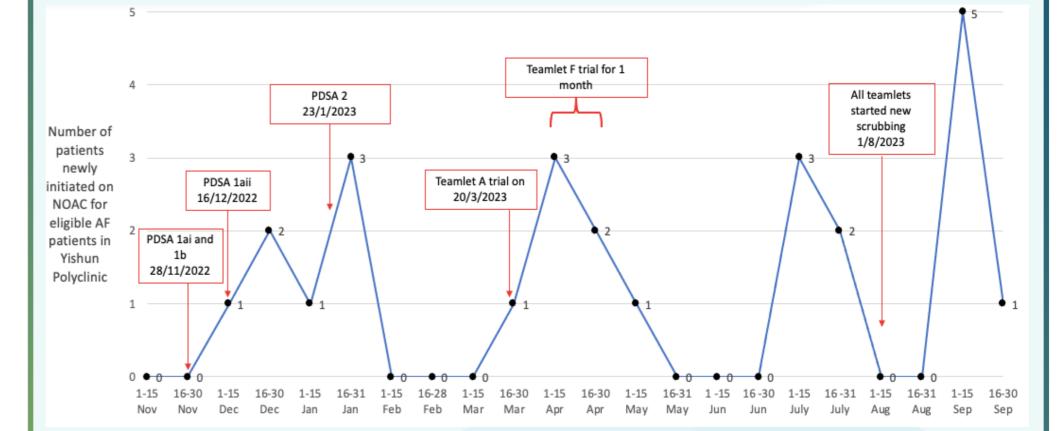
Lessons Learnt

- We learnt that small and incremental changes made tackling a complex problem easier and more acceptable for those involved. When the AF protocol was first introduced, it was tedious and time-consuming. With feedback, we adopted a smartphrase to aid physicians with NOAC initiation.
- Look out for interventions that create or add onto workload, as they are not likely to succeed on the ground. Sharing work makes the job lighter. The project was planned hoping that clinical pharmacists would scrub AF reports for the clinic and counsel patients before the physician's consult. The sheer workload while difficult for one person, was manageable when shared with the different teamlets.



Outcomes & Impacts

Since November 2022, **25 eligible patients have been initiated on NOAC for the prevention of stroke**. There has been no bleeding episodes.



"Since evidence has shown Apixaban is better than Aspirin in preventing stroke and it is now cheaper with government subsidies, of course I should make the switch!" Mdm CMM, patient with AF

This project commenced in Yishun Polyclinic Teamlet D in November 2022. As of August 2023, it has been introduced to all teamlets in the polyclinic, with plans to scale to the rest of National Healthcare Group Polyclinics.