Dental note

New antiplatelet drugs

Dentists should be familiar with clopidogrel, which is commonly used in combination with aspirin following placement of coronary stents to prevent coronary stent thrombosis. Clopidogrel may also be used in patients who are unable to take aspirin. Ticagrelor and prasugrel are new antiplatelet drugs that may be used as alternatives to clopidogrel.

All antiplatelet drugs place patients at an increased risk of bleeding following invasive dental procedures, especially dental extractions or dentoalveolar surgery. In patients who are receiving dual antiplatelet therapy following coronary artery stenting, premature discontinuation of the drugs can increase the risk of stent thrombosis, which may lead to acute myocardial infarction and death.¹

Australian guidelines² recommend that patients requiring dental extractions or dentoalveolar surgery should not cease antiplatelet therapy, either monotherapy with aspirin, or dual therapy where aspirin is combined with other antiplatelet drugs. Patients should be warned of the increased risk of prolonged bleeding and bruising.

REFERENCES


Conflict of interest: none declared

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