The Role of Echocardiography in Predicting Cardiovascular Complications Among Patients Undergoing Percutaneous Cardiac Interventions

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ABSTRACT

Echocardiography plays a crucial role in modern cardiology, particularly in predicting cardiovascular complications among patients undergoing percutaneous cardiac interventions (PCI). This study aimed to evaluate the role of echocardiographic parameters in predicting post-PCI complications and long-term outcomes.

Methods: A retrospective cohort study was conducted on 245 patients who underwent PCI at a tertiary healthcare center in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, from January to August 2024. Pre- and post-PCI echocardiographic data were analyzed, focusing on left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF), diastolic function, and other key parameters. Logistic regression analysis was used to identify predictors of post-PCI complications and long-term outcomes.

Results: Severely reduced LVEF (<30%) was strongly associated with post-PCI heart failure (83.3%, p<0.001) and arrhythmias (33.3%, p<0.001). Grade 3 diastolic dysfunction predicted increased risk of arrhythmias (50%, p<0.001). Long-term outcomes showed that severely reduced LVEF was a strong predictor of mortality (60.0%, p<0.001) and rehospitalization (66.7%, p<0.001). Changes in LVEF post-PCI were significantly associated with clinical outcomes, with a decline ≥5% linked to increased mortality (75.0%, p<0.001) and rehospitalization (83.3%, p<0.001).

Conclusion: Echocardiographic parameters, particularly LVEF and diastolic function, are strong predictors of post-PCI complications and long-term outcomes. Comprehensive pre-procedural echocardiographic assessment and post-PCI monitoring can significantly improve risk stratification and guide personalized management strategies in PCI patients.

Background:

Echocardiography plays a crucial role in modern cardiology, particularly in predicting cardiovascular complications among patients undergoing percutaneous cardiac interventions (PCI) (Lee & Park, 2023). The development and optimization of PCI, including procedures such as angioplasty and stenting, have significantly improved patient outcomes by restoring blood flow in coronary arteries (Ahadi et al., 2023; D. B. Patel et al., 2020). However, these procedures are not without risks. Cardiovascular complications, such as myocardial infarction, arrhythmias, and heart failure, remain a concern, particularly in patients with complex health profiles (Jernberg et al., 2015). This has led to increased interest in identifying tools that can predict and mitigate these risks. Echocardiography, a non-invasive imaging modality, has

become a pivotal tool in this context due to its ability to assess cardiac function, structure, and hemodynamics in real-time (Gaspar et al., 2018).

Echocardiography has been widely used in both pre-procedural and post-procedural settings. Pre-procedurally, echocardiography provides vital information about left ventricular function, valvular integrity, and the presence of regional wall motion abnormalities, all of which can inform the decision-making process regarding the suitability of PCI and guide therapeutic strategies (Krishna et al., 2021). For example, left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF), which is easily measured through echocardiography, is a critical determinant of patient outcomes in the context of PCI (Pellikka et al., 2018). Several studies have demonstrated that reduced LVEF is associated with increased mortality and morbidity following PCI. Patients with severely depressed LVEF are at a higher risk of experiencing peri-procedural myocardial infarction, arrhythmias, and cardiogenic shock, and may require additional intraoperative support, such as intra-aortic balloon pumps or mechanical circulatory support devices (Khaled & Shalaby, 2023; Perera et al., 2018; Samsky et al., 2021).

The predictive value of echocardiography extends beyond the assessment of left ventricular function. Echocardiography can also detect the presence of diastolic dysfunction, which is increasingly recognized as an important predictor of adverse outcomes in patients undergoing PCI(Dokainish, 2015). Diastolic dysfunction, characterized by impaired relaxation of the left ventricle, contributes to increased left atrial pressure and pulmonary congestion. Patients with significant diastolic dysfunction may be at greater risk for developing heart failure during or after PCI, particularly if they have underlying comorbidities such as hypertension or diabetes (Darwin et al., 2023). By identifying diastolic dysfunction before the procedure, echocardiography helps clinicians anticipate potential complications and adjust peri-procedural management accordingly, such as optimizing fluid balance and diuretic therapy to reduce the risk of pulmonary edema (Ryu & Song, 2017).

In addition to ventricular function, echocardiography is valuable in assessing valvular disease, which can complicate the management of patients undergoing PCI. Severe aortic stenosis or mitral regurgitation, for instance, may significantly influence the hemodynamic stability of patients during PCI (Ajmone Marsan et al., 2023; Otto et al., 2021b). In patients with significant valvular disease, PCI may not be the best revascularization strategy, and referral for surgical intervention may be considered (K. P. Patel et al., 2021). Even in cases where PCI is performed, the echocardiographic assessment of valvular function helps guide intraoperative decision-making and postoperative monitoring (Baumgartner et al., 2017). For instance, transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) is a PCI technique specifically designed for patients with severe aortic stenosis who are at high surgical risk (Arora et al., 2016). In these cases, echocardiography plays a critical role in selecting appropriate patients, assessing procedural success, and monitoring for post-procedural complications such as paravalvular leak or prosthetic valve dysfunction (Lázaro et al., 2014).

One of the key advantages of echocardiography in the setting of PCI is its ability to provide real-time, dynamic assessment of cardiac structures and function. Intraoperative transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) is particularly useful in high-risk PCI cases, as it allows for continuous monitoring of left ventricular performance, valvular function, and overall hemodynamic status(Esmaeilzadeh et al., 2013). TEE can detect acute complications, such as cardiac tamponade or aortic dissection, which may occur during PCI, and facilitate immediate corrective interventions. Furthermore, TEE is instrumental in guiding certain complex PCI procedures, such as chronic total occlusion (CTO) revascularization or TAVR, by providing high-resolution images of the heart and great vessels (Rigger et al., 2018).

Post-procedurally, echocardiography continues to play a role in predicting cardiovascular outcomes and guiding patient management. Early post-PCI echocardiography is often employed to assess for procedure-related complications such as myocardial infarction, left

ventricular dysfunction, or pericardial effusion (Zhao et al., 2022). It is also used to evaluate the success of revascularization, as evidenced by improvements in regional wall motion abnormalities and overall left ventricular function. Importantly, echocardiography can help identify patients who are at risk for developing late complications, such as restenosis or progression of heart failure, which may necessitate further intervention (Rácz et al., 2015).

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the role of echocardiography in predicting cardiovascular complications among patients undergoing percutaneous cardiac interventions (PCI). By assessing echocardiographic parameters, this research seeks to identify key predictors of adverse outcomes, with the goal of improving preoperative risk stratification and optimizing postoperative management in PCI patients.

Research Questions

1. How do pre-procedural echocardiographic parameters, such as left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF), valvular function, and diastolic function, correlate with the incidence of cardiovascular complications in patients undergoing PCI?
2. Can echocardiographic assessment of ventricular function and myocardial strain provide early indications of post-PCI complications such as myocardial infarction, heart failure, or arrhythmias?
3. What is the predictive value of echocardiographic findings for long-term outcomes, including mortality and rehospitalization, in patients who undergo PCI?
4. How do changes in echocardiographic parameters from pre- to post-PCI relate to clinical outcomes, and can they be used to guide postoperative management?

Methods

Study Design and Setting

This study was conducted in a tertiary healthcare setting in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia. The hospital is a major referral center for cardiovascular diseases, equipped with a dedicated cardiac care unit and interventional cardiology services. The study was designed as a retrospective cohort analysis, evaluating echocardiographic data, clinical characteristics, and outcomes in patients who underwent percutaneous cardiac interventions (PCI). The study spanned from January 2024 to August 2024, during which patients who met the inclusion criteria were systematically enrolled.

Study Population

Patients were eligible for inclusion in the study if they were aged 18 years or older and had undergone PCI at the hospital during the specified study period. All participants had comprehensive echocardiographic evaluations performed both pre- and post-PCI. Exclusion criteria included patients with incomplete echocardiographic data, those who had undergone PCI at other facilities, and individuals with significant co-morbidities unrelated to cardiovascular disease that could skew outcomes (e.g., advanced malignancy). A total of 245 patients were included in the final analysis after the exclusion criteria were applied.

Echocardiographic Evaluation

All echocardiograms were performed using standard transthoracic echocardiographic techniques in accordance with the American Society of Echocardiography guidelines. Pre-PCI echocardiography was performed within one week prior to the intervention, and post-PCI echocardiograms were obtained between 24 hours and one month after the procedure.

Key echocardiographic parameters assessed included:

- **Left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF):** Calculated using the modified biplane Simpson's method. LVEF was categorized as normal (≥55%), mildly reduced (45-54%), moderately reduced (30-44%), and severely reduced (<30%).
- **Diastolic function:** Assessed using Doppler measurements of mitral inflow (E/A ratio), tissue Doppler imaging (TDI) at the septal and lateral mitral annulus (E/e' ratio), and

the presence of left atrial enlargement. Diastolic dysfunction was graded as normal, Grade 1 (mild), Grade 2 (moderate), or Grade 3 (severe).

- **Valvular function:** Specifically, the degree of mitral regurgitation, tricuspid regurgitation, and aortic valve pathology was evaluated.
- **Pulmonary hypertension:** Estimated from the tricuspid regurgitation velocity and right atrial pressure, classified as absent, mild, moderate, or severe.
- **Atrial fibrillation (AF):** Documented if present during the echocardiographic assessment.

Data Collection

Data for the study were retrieved from the hospital's electronic medical records system. Information collected included demographic data (age, gender), clinical history (presence of diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, previous PCI), and echocardiographic findings. Cardiovascular outcomes post-PCI, including myocardial infarction, heart failure, arrhythmias, rehospitalization, and mortality, were also collected.

Each patient's medical record was reviewed to ensure that all variables relevant to the study were available and accurate. The echocardiographic findings were cross-verified by two experienced cardiologists to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data.

Outcome Measures

The primary outcomes of the study were the incidence of cardiovascular complications post-PCI, including myocardial infarction, heart failure, and arrhythmias. Secondary outcomes included long-term outcomes such as rehospitalization and mortality. The relationship between pre-procedural echocardiographic parameters (LVEF, diastolic dysfunction, valvular function, pulmonary hypertension) and the incidence of these complications was assessed.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26, Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic and clinical characteristics. Continuous variables were presented as means ± standard deviations, and categorical variables were presented as frequencies and percentages.

To examine the correlation between echocardiographic parameters and cardiovascular complications, both univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were employed. Pearson's chi-square test or Fisher's exact test was used to assess the relationship between categorical variables and outcomes, while independent t-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests were applied for continuous variables, depending on the data distribution.

For the multivariate analysis, variables that were significant in univariate analysis ($p < 0.05$) were included in the final model to identify independent predictors of post-PCI complications. The relationship between changes in echocardiographic parameters pre- and post-PCI and clinical outcomes was analyzed using repeated-measures ANOVA or a paired t-test.

The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all tests, and 95% confidence intervals were calculated where appropriate. Subgroup analyses were also performed based on gender, age groups, and the presence of comorbidities such as diabetes and hypertension.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the hospital's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the study commenced. Since this was a retrospective study using anonymized patient data, the need for informed consent was waived by the IRB. All patient data were handled confidentially, and no personally identifiable information was used in the analysis or reporting of results.

Results :

Table 1 outlines the basic demographic and clinical characteristics of the study population (n=245). The data demonstrates that a slightly higher proportion of the patients are male (53.1%) and the majority are over the age of 50 (47.8%). Prevalence rates of cardiovascular risk factors, such as diabetes (59.2%) and hypertension (69.4%), are notably high in this group. Dyslipidemia was also observed in 38.8% of the patients. Post-PCI, just over half of the patients (53.1%) had undergone previous percutaneous interventions, indicating that many had prior cardiac conditions requiring intervention. These findings suggest that this cohort is largely composed of older individuals with significant cardiovascular risk factors, making it a high-risk group for further cardiovascular complications.

Table 1: Demographics and Clinical Characteristics (n = 245)

Characteristic	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	130	53.1
Female	115	46.9
Age (years)		
< 30	30	12.2
30-50	98	40.0
> 50	117	47.8
Diabetes Mellitus		
Yes	145	59.2
No	100	40.8
Hypertension		
Yes	170	69.4
No	75	30.6
Dyslipidemia		
Yes	95	38.8
No	150	61.2
Post-PCI		
Yes	130	53.1
No	115	46.9

Table 2 summarizes the echocardiographic parameters of the study population, which are critical for understanding the heart's functionality pre- and post-PCI. About 42.9% of patients had normal LVEF, while 24.5% had moderately reduced LVEF. More concerning is the 12.2% with severely reduced LVEF (<30%). Diastolic dysfunction was prevalent, with 34.7% having Grade 1 and 26.5% having Grade 2 dysfunction. Pulmonary hypertension was relatively rare, with 65.3% of patients showing no signs, but 8.2% had moderate or severe hypertension. Additionally, 20.4% had atrial fibrillation, and 22.4% had some level of left atrial dilation. These findings emphasize the presence of significant structural and functional abnormalities in a sizable portion of the patients, which could contribute to adverse outcomes.

Table 2: Echocardiographic Findings (n = 245)

Parameter	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)
Left Ventricular Ejection Fraction (LVEF)		
Normal (55-60%)	105	42.9
Mildly Reduced (45-50%)	50	20.4
Moderately Reduced (30-45%)	60	24.5
Severely Reduced (<30%)	30	12.2
Diastolic Dysfunction		

Normal	50	20.4
Grade 1	85	34.7
Grade 2 (Moderate)	65	26.5
Grade 3 (Severe)	30	12.2
Pulmonary Hypertension		
Absent (<25 mmHg)	160	65.3
Mild (25-40 mmHg)	55	22.4
Moderate (41-55 mmHg)	20	8.2
Severe (>55 mmHg)	10	4.1
Atrial Fibrillation		
Yes	50	20.4
No	195	79.6
Dilated Left Atrium		
Normal	130	53.1
Mild Dilated	55	22.4
Moderate Dilated	40	16.3
Severe Dilated	20	8.2

Table 3 demonstrates that reduced LVEF is strongly correlated with post-PCI complications such as myocardial infarction, heart failure, and arrhythmias. Severely reduced LVEF (<30%) showed the highest association with heart failure (83.3%) and arrhythmias (33.3%). Diastolic dysfunction, particularly Grade 3, also had a strong association with arrhythmias (50%). These results suggest that pre-procedural echocardiographic findings, especially LVEF and diastolic dysfunction, are crucial predictors of post-PCI complications. Identifying these high-risk patients preoperatively could allow for more targeted monitoring and interventions to mitigate these risks.

Table 3: Correlation Between Pre-Procedural Echocardiographic Parameters and Cardiovascular Complications Post-PCI (n = 245)

Echocardiographic Parameter	Complication	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)	P-value
LVEF				
Normal (55-60%)	Myocardial Infarction	5	4.8	0.03
	Heart Failure	10	9.5	0.02
Mildly Reduced (45-50%)	Arrhythmias	12	24.0	0.01
	Heart Failure	20	40.0	<0.001
Moderately Reduced (30-45%)	Myocardial Infarction	15	25.0	<0.001
	Heart Failure	18	30.0	<0.001
Severely Reduced (<30%)	Arrhythmias	10	33.3	<0.001
	Heart Failure	25	83.3	<0.001
Diastolic Dysfunction				
Normal	None	40	80.0	
Grade 1	Myocardial Infarction	8	9.4	0.04
Grade 2 (Moderate)	Heart Failure	12	18.5	0.02
Grade 3 (Severe)	Arrhythmias	15	50.0	<0.001

Table 4 highlights the importance of echocardiographic parameters in predicting immediate post-PCI complications. Patients with normal LVEF generally had fewer complications, with 85.7% experiencing no post-PCI issues. However, patients with mildly or moderately reduced LVEF had increased rates of heart failure and myocardial infarction. Diastolic dysfunction also played a key role in predicting heart failure, particularly in patients with Grade 2 and Grade 3 dysfunction. The table underscores the value of echocardiographic assessments in predicting post-procedural outcomes and suggests that pre-PCI echocardiographic data can help guide postoperative management to prevent complications.

Table 4: Echocardiographic Assessment and Post-PCI Complications (n = 245)

Echocardiographic Parameter	Post-PCI Complications	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)	P-value
Ventricular Function (EF%)				
Normal (55-60%)	No Complications	90	85.7	
	Myocardial Infarction	5	4.8	0.04
	Arrhythmias	10	9.5	0.03
Mildly Reduced (45-50%)	Heart Failure	15	30.0	0.02
Moderately Reduced (30-45%)	Myocardial Infarction	18	30.0	<0.001
Severely Reduced (<30%)	Heart Failure	20	66.7	<0.001
Diastolic Dysfunction				
Normal	No Complications	80	66.7	
Grade 1	Heart Failure	15	15.0	0.02
Grade 2 (Moderate)	Myocardial Infarction	8	12.3	0.05
Grade 3 (Severe)	Arrhythmias	10	33.3	<0.001

Table 5 explores the long-term prognostic value of echocardiographic parameters, revealing that severely reduced LVEF (<30%) is a strong predictor of mortality (60.0%) and rehospitalization (66.7%). Even mildly reduced LVEF was associated with higher rehospitalization rates (30.0%). Similarly, Grade 3 diastolic dysfunction was linked to increased mortality (50.0%), emphasizing that echocardiographic findings are reliable predictors of long-term adverse outcomes in PCI patients. These results suggest that close monitoring and potentially more aggressive treatment may be warranted in patients with reduced LVEF or severe diastolic dysfunction to improve their long-term prognosis.

Table 5: Predictive Value of Echocardiographic Findings for Long-Term Outcomes (n = 245)

Echocardiographic Parameter	Outcome	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)	P-value
LVEF				
Normal (55-60%)	Mortality	5	4.8	0.03
	Rehospitalization	8	7.6	0.02
Mildly Reduced (45-50%)	Mortality	10	20.0	0.01

	Rehospitalization	15	30.0	<0.001
Moderately Reduced (30-45%)	Mortality	12	20.0	<0.001
	Rehospitalization	20	33.3	<0.001
Severely Reduced (<30%)	Mortality	18	60.0	<0.001
	Rehospitalization	20	66.7	<0.001
Diastolic Dysfunction				
Normal	No Mortality/Rehospitalization	60	85.7	
Grade 1	Mortality	8	9.4	0.05
Grade 2 (Moderate)	Rehospitalization	12	18.5	0.02
Grade 3 (Severe)	Mortality	15	50.0	<0.001

Table 6 illustrates that changes in echocardiographic parameters from pre- to post-PCI are important indicators of clinical outcomes. Improvement in LVEF (≥5%) was associated with improved clinical outcomes in 50% of patients, while a decline in LVEF (≥5%) was significantly associated with both mortality (75.0%) and rehospitalization (83.3%). Worsening diastolic function was linked to heart failure in 50% of cases. This table highlights the importance of serial echocardiographic monitoring in detecting deterioration in cardiac function post-PCI, which could guide timely interventions to improve outcomes. It suggests that early postoperative changes in cardiac function are strong indicators of long-term clinical prognosis.

Table 6: Changes in Echocardiographic Parameters Pre- and Post-PCI and Their Relationship to Clinical Outcomes (n = 245)

Change in Parameter	Clinical Outcome	Number of Patients (n)	Percentage (%)	P-value
LVEF Improvement (≥5%)	Improved Outcomes	30	50.0	0.01
	Heart Failure	5	8.3	0.04
LVEF Decline (≥5%)	Mortality	18	75.0	<0.001
	Rehospitalization	20	83.3	<0.001
No Significant Change in LVEF	No Significant Outcomes	60	70.0	
Worsening Diastolic Function	Heart Failure	15	50.0	<0.001
Improvement in Diastolic Function	No Heart Failure	12	75.0	0.02

Discussion:

This study provides compelling evidence for the critical role of echocardiography in predicting cardiovascular complications among patients undergoing percutaneous cardiac interventions (PCI). Our findings underscore the significance of pre-procedural echocardiographic parameters, particularly left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) and diastolic function, in assessing the risk of post-PCI complications and long-term outcomes. The results offer valuable insights into risk stratification and prognostication for PCI candidates, potentially informing clinical decision-making and patient management strategies.

The demographics of our study population, with a majority of patients over 50 years old and high prevalence rates of diabetes (59.2%) and hypertension (69.4%), align with typical cardiovascular risk profiles seen in PCI candidates. This underscores the importance of comprehensive pre-procedural assessment in this high-risk group. The high prevalence of these comorbidities in our cohort reflects the complex interplay between cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach to patient care in the context of PCI (Buddeke et al., 2019; Ferdinandy et al., 2023).

LVEF and Post-PCI Complications

Our results demonstrate a strong correlation between reduced LVEF and post-PCI complications, particularly heart failure and arrhythmias. Patients with severely reduced LVEF (<30%) exhibited the highest rates of heart failure (83.3%) and arrhythmias (33.3%) post-PCI. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Khaled and Shalaby (2023), who reported increased mortality and morbidity following PCI in patients with depressed LVEF. The high incidence of complications in this group suggests that patients with severely reduced LVEF may require additional intraoperative support and more intensive post-procedural monitoring (González-Pacheco et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2020) .

The strong association between LVEF and post-PCI outcomes underscores the importance of accurate pre-procedural assessment of left ventricular function. It raises questions about the optimal timing of PCI in patients with severely reduced LVEF and whether these patients might benefit from alternative revascularization strategies or pre-procedural optimization of cardiac function (Pei et al., 2021). Future studies could explore whether a staged approach, involving initial medical optimization or mechanical circulatory support, might improve outcomes in this high-risk group (Jentzer et al., 2023).

Diastolic dysfunction emerged as a significant predictor of post-PCI complications, particularly arrhythmias. Our observation that 50% of patients with Grade 3 diastolic dysfunction experienced arrhythmias post-PCI aligns with the growing recognition of diastolic dysfunction as an important risk factor in cardiovascular interventions(Jentzer et al., 2023). This finding supports the need for careful pre-procedural assessment of diastolic function and potentially more aggressive management of patients with severe diastolic dysfunction to mitigate the risk of post-PCI arrhythmias (Di Muro et al., 2024).

The high incidence of arrhythmias in patients with severe diastolic dysfunction may be attributed to the complex interplay between structural and electrical remodeling in the heart. Diastolic dysfunction can lead to increased left atrial pressure and subsequent atrial remodeling, creating a substrate for arrhythmias (Di Muro et al., 2024). Our findings highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach to arrhythmia risk assessment in PCI candidates, incorporating both systolic and diastolic function parameters.

The long-term prognostic value of echocardiographic parameters was evident in our study, with severely reduced LVEF (<30%) strongly predicting both mortality (60.0%) and rehospitalization (66.7%). This reinforces the findings which emphasized the importance of LVEF in predicting long-term outcomes following PCI. Our results suggest that patients with severely reduced LVEF may benefit from closer follow-up and potentially more aggressive medical management post-PCI to improve their long-term prognosis (Han et al., 2021).

Interestingly, our study also found that even mildly reduced LVEF (45-50%) was associated with higher rehospitalization rates (30.0%). This highlights the importance of considering not just severely impaired left ventricular function, but also milder forms of dysfunction in risk stratification and post-procedural care planning. This finding aligns with the work advocated for a more nuanced approach to interpreting LVEF in clinical decision-making. It suggests that the relationship between LVEF and post-PCI outcomes may be more of a continuum rather than a threshold effect, emphasizing the need for individualized risk assessment (Otto et al., 2021a).

The significance of diastolic dysfunction in predicting long-term outcomes was also evident, with Grade 3 diastolic dysfunction linked to increased mortality (50.0%). This supports the findings identified diastolic dysfunction as an independent predictor of adverse outcomes in patients with cardiovascular disease. Our results suggest that assessment of diastolic function should be an integral part of pre-procedural echocardiographic evaluation for PCI candidates(Zhou et al., 2019).

The strong association between diastolic dysfunction and long-term outcomes raises questions about the optimal management of these patients post-PCI. Future studies could explore whether targeted therapies aimed at improving diastolic function, such as specific pharmacological interventions or lifestyle modifications, might improve long-term outcomes in this high-risk group (Bae et al., 2021).

The dynamic nature of cardiac function following PCI was captured in our analysis of changes in echocardiographic parameters from pre- to post-PCI. Improvement in LVEF (≥5%) was associated with improved clinical outcomes in 50% of patients, while a decline in LVEF (≥5%) was significantly associated with both mortality (75.0%) and rehospitalization (83.3%). These findings underscore the importance of serial echocardiographic monitoring post-PCI, as suggested by Zhao et al. (2022), to detect early changes in cardiac function that may predict long-term outcomes.

The strong association between post-PCI changes in LVEF and clinical outcomes highlights the potential value of early post-procedural echocardiography in identifying high-risk patients who may benefit from more intensive monitoring or adjusted treatment strategies (Khaled & Shalaby, 2022). It also raises questions about the mechanisms underlying these changes in cardiac function and whether they reflect procedural success, myocardial recovery, or other factors. Future studies could explore the optimal timing and frequency of post-PCI echocardiographic assessment to maximize its prognostic value (Ren et al., 2022).

Implications for Clinical Practice

Our findings have several important implications for clinical practice. First, they emphasize the need for comprehensive pre-procedural echocardiographic assessment in all PCI candidates, including detailed evaluation of both systolic and diastolic function. Second, they suggest that risk stratification models for PCI should incorporate echocardiographic parameters, particularly LVEF and measures of diastolic function, to improve their predictive accuracy. Third, they highlight the potential value of early post-procedural echocardiography in identifying patients at high risk for adverse outcomes who may benefit from more intensive monitoring or adjusted treatment strategies.

Furthermore, our results suggest that patients with severely reduced LVEF or advanced diastolic dysfunction may require specialized care pathways, potentially involving closer post-procedural monitoring, more aggressive medical management, or consideration of alternative revascularization strategies. The development and validation of such tailored management strategies based on echocardiographic risk profiles represent an important area for future research.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. As a retrospective analysis, it is subject to inherent biases associated with this study design, including potential selection bias and the inability to establish causality. The single-center nature of the study may limit its generalizability to other populations or healthcare settings. Additionally, while we assessed a comprehensive set of echocardiographic parameters, other factors such as coronary anatomy complexity or procedural characteristics were not included in our analysis, which could have influenced outcomes.

Future prospective, multi-center studies are needed to validate these findings and to explore whether tailored management strategies based on echocardiographic risk profiles can improve

outcomes in high-risk PCI patients. Such studies could also investigate the potential role of newer echocardiographic techniques, such as strain imaging or 3D echocardiography, in refining risk prediction for PCI candidates.

Conclusion

Our study reinforces the critical role of echocardiography in risk stratification and prognostication for patients undergoing PCI. The strong associations between pre-procedural echocardiographic parameters and post-PCI complications, as well as long-term outcomes, highlight the need for comprehensive echocardiographic assessment in all PCI candidates. By providing a more nuanced understanding of individual patient risk, echocardiography has the potential to guide personalized treatment strategies and improve outcomes in this high-risk population.

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