Taken together, these findings suggest that fasudil might be a useful adjunctive therapy to standard cardiovascular regimens for patients with stable angina.

Claire Braybrook

Original article Vicari RM *et al.* (2005) Efficacy and safety of fasudil in patients with stable angina. *JACC* 46: 1803–1811

Safety and efficacy of polymer-based paclitaxel-eluting stents

Although drug-eluting stents for percutaneous intervention are associated with a reduced incidence of restenosis and revascularization compared with bare-metal stents, their use for treating long, complex artery lesions has not been fully investigated.

Dawkins *et al.* designed a study to assess the safety and efficacy of the Taxus[®] moderate-release paclitaxel-eluting stent (Boston Scientific, Maple Grove, MN) in patients with long coronary lesions. This stent is balloon-expandable and the paclitaxel is carried in a polymer coating that allows biphasic and controlled drug release following implantation.

A total of 448 patients with an average coronary lesion length of 20.6 mm were randomized to receive a drug-eluting Taxus[®] stent or an uncoated control stent. At 9-month follow-up, trial participants underwent coronary angiography to assess the degree of target-vessel revascularization. Secondary endpoints assessed in the study included the rate of major adverse cardiac events and binary restenosis.

Target-vessel revascularization was 53% lower among patients who received Taxus[®] stents than among those in the control group ($P=0.0027$). There was also less in-stent binary restenosis in the Taxus[®] group (9.1%) than in the control group (32.9%; $P=0.0001$), but the rates of major adverse cardiac events were similar.

Findings from this prospective trial indicate that the Taxus[®] moderate-release stent system is safe and effective for treating long, complex coronary artery lesions, and supports the routine use of drug-eluting stents in clinical practice.

Claire Braybrook

Original article Dawkins KD *et al.* (2005) Clinical efficacy of polymer-based paclitaxel-eluting stents in the treatment of complex, long coronary artery lesions from a multicenter, randomized trial: support for the use of drug-eluting stents in contemporary clinical practice. *Circulation* 112: 3306–3313

A new method for assessing stroke in the emergency room

In view of the fact that many patients with stroke present to the emergency room, recognition of the signs and symptoms of stroke by emergency-room physicians is crucial if early intervention is to be achieved. A UK group has developed a new stroke recognition tool for use in this setting, which promises to improve the differentiation of acute stroke from other conditions.

The design of the instrument—termed the Recognition of Stroke in the Emergency Room (ROSIER) scale—began with a 1-year developmental phase, involving 343 adult referrals from the emergency room to the acute stroke team. By recording the clinical characteristics of the patients with confirmed stroke or transient ischemic attack ($n=176$) and those without stroke ($n=167$), the researchers developed a seven-item stroke recognition tool. This tool covered loss of consciousness or syncope, seizures, asymmetric weakness of the face, arm or leg, and problems with speech or the visual field. Using a simple proforma to generate a 'ROSIER score', the instrument could then be used to determine the likelihood of stroke.

Following an internal validation process, the team carried out a 9-month prospective validation of the instrument. During this period, the proportion of non-stroke cases referred from the emergency room fell significantly. The ROSIER instrument "has good diagnostic accuracy and is simple to administer," say the researchers, and might be useful in the early recognition of stroke by emergency-room staff.

Ruth Kirby

Original article Nor AM *et al.* (2005) The recognition of stroke in the emergency room (ROSIER) scale: development and validation of a stroke recognition instrument. *Lancet Neurol* 4: 727–734

Early cardiac screening and genetic analysis in patients with muscular dystrophy

Dilated cardiomyopathy—the most frequent cardiac abnormality in Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) and Becker muscular