

Prevalence, risk factor burden, and severity of coronary artery disease in patients with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia hospitalized for an acute myocardial infarction: Data from the French RICO survey

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Prevalence, risk factor burden and severity of coronary artery disease in 1 patients with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia hospitalized for an 2 acute myocardial infarction: data from the French RICO Survey 3 4 Michel FARNIER^{1,2}, MD, PhD, Clémence SALIGNON-VERNAY, MD², Hermann YAO², MD, 5 Frédéric CHAGUE², MD, Philippe BRUNEL³, MD, Maud MAZA², Msc, Damien BRUNET³, 6 MD, Florence BICHAT², PhD, Jean-Claude BEER², MD, Yves COTTIN², MD, PhD, Marianne 7 8 ZELLER⁴, PhD 9 ¹. Lipid Clinic, Point Medical, rond-point de la Nation, 21000 Dijon, France 10 ². Department of Cardiology, CHU Dijon Bourgogne, 5 Bd Jeanne d'Arc, 21000 DIJON, 11 12 France 3. Hopital privé Dijon Bourgogne, 22 avenue Françoise Giroud, 21000 Dijon, France 13 ⁴ Equipe PEC2, EA 7460, UFR Sciences de Santé, Université de Bourgogne Franche 14 15 Comté, Esplanade Erasme, 21078 Dijon, France. 16 17 Corresponding author: 18 Michel Farnier, MD, PhD 19 Lipid Clinic, Point Medical, rond-point de la Nation, 21000 Dijon, France 20 Email: michelfarnier@nerim.net 21 22 Tel. 33.3.80.70.38.13 23 24 **KEY WORDS:** Familial hypercholesterolemia, Myocardial Infarction, Prevalence 25 **RUNNING TITLE:** 26 FH and acute myocardial infarction 27

28 **ABSTRACT**

- 29 BACKGROUND: Individuals with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) are at
- 30 high risk of early myocardial infarction (MI). However, coronary artery disease (CAD) burden
- of FH remains not well described, especially for French patients.
- 32 **OBJECTIVE:** To assess the prevalence of FH and severity of CAD from a large database of
- a French regional registry of acute MI.
- 34 **METHODS:** All consecutive patients hospitalized for an acute MI in a multicenter database
- from 2001-2017 were considered. FH was diagnosed using an algorithm adapted from the
- 36 Dutch Lipid Clinic Network criteria. The prevalence and clinical features of FH, and the
- 37 severity of CAD were assessed.
- 38 **RESULTS:** Among the 11624 patients included in the study, the proportion of
- 39 "probable/definite", "possible", and "unlikely" FH in patients with MI was 2.1% (n=249), 20.7%
- 40 (n=2405), and 77.2% (n=8970). When compared with patients "unlikely" FH, patients with
- 41 "probable/definite" FH were 20 years younger (51 vs 71, p<.001), with a lower rate of
- diabetes (17% vs 25%, p=.007) and a higher prevalence of personal and familial history of
- 43 CAD. Chronic statin treatment was only used in 48% of FH patients and ezetimibe in 8%.
- 44 After adjustment for age, sex and diabetes, FH patients were characterized by increased
- extent of CAD (SYNTAX score 11 vs 7, p<.001) and multivessel disease (55% vs 40%,
- 46 p<.001).
- 47 **CONCLUSIONS:** In this large cohort of French individuals, FH was common in patients with
- 48 MI, associated with markedly early age of MI and severity of CAD burden and limited use of
- 49 preventive lipid lowering therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) is an autosomal co-dominant genetic disease associated with significantly increased risk of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease including myocardial infraction (MI) [1,2]. The prevalence of heterozygous FH has been estimated to be 1:250 individuals in Western populations [3,4]. In the general population, FH is underdiagnosed and, for many FH patients, the initial clinical manifestation is the occurrence of an acute coronary syndrome (ACS) [1,5]. As a consequence, the prevalence of FH is considerably higher among patients hospitalized for ACS compared with the general population [6-13].

Several recent studies have determined the prognostic impact of FH in patients after a first ACS [9,12-15]. However, the severity of coronary artery disease (CAD) has been poorly described in patients with FH hospitalized for an acute MI [16]. Moreover, no data are available on the prevalence and characteristics of French patients with FH and hospitalized for MI. The detection of FH at time of an acute coronary event is not systematically performed in France, although these patients are at high risk of recurrence of cardiovascular events [17].

Therefore, in the present study, we aimed to investigate the prevalence of FH, the risk factor burden and the severity of CAD at the time of admission in a coronary care unit (CCU) from a large database of a regional French registry (RICO registry) of patients with acute MI.

METHODS

Study population

This study was performed with the framework of the RICO (obseRvatoire des Infarctus de Côte d'Or) survey designed to include all consecutive ≥ 18 years patients hospitalized for an acute MI since 2001 in a multicenter registry of all the CCU of the region of Côte d'Or in France. Details regarding the methods of the RICO survey were previously reported [18]. Briefly, baseline characteristics including demographic data, risk factors, treatments for hypercholesterolemia, family history of CAD (defined as premature CAD in first-degree relative < 55 years for men or 65 years for women), cardiovascular history and chronic treatments were prospectively collected. At admission, the following data were also collected: Killip class, ECG signs and hemodynamic parameters (heart arte (HR), systolic (SBP) and diastolic (DBP) blood pressure). Left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) was measured by echocardiography < 12h following admission. Blood sample was taken at admission for lipid profile. Hospital complications were determined and delays in time to admission as well as prolongation of stay in CCU). For each patient, GRACE (Global Registry of Acute Coronary Events) risk score, as a tool to assess mortality risk in acute MI (http://www.outcomesumassmed.org/grace/acs_risk/acs_risk_content.html) and SYNTAX (SYNergy between PCI

with TAXus and cardiac surgery trial) score, as an index of CAD severity, were calculated [19,20].

Patients were recruited consecutively after obtaining written informed consent, with the exception of patients who died in the first hours after admission or with a severe cardiogenic shock. The study was conducted in compliance with Good Clinical Practice guidelines and the French data protection law. The protocol was approved by the Dijon University Hospital Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and was declared to the Commission Nationale Informatique et Liberté.

For this study, 11 624 consecutive patients hospitalized between 2001 and 2017 were recruited.

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Diagnosis of familial hypercholesterolemia

All patients were assessed for the presence of FH based on the Dutch Lipid Clinic Network (DLCN) criteria [21], recommended by guidelines to diagnose FH in the general population in central European countries [1, 22]. The score was calculated using points from the following criteria: premature family history of CAD for a first-degree relative (at age < 55 years for men and < 60 years for women; 1 point); premature personal history of CAD (2 points) or vascular disease (1 point); and plasma low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C > 330 mg/dL (8 points), 250-329 mg/dL (5 points), 190-249 mg/dL (3 points), 155-189 mg/dL(1 point). In individuals on lipid-lowering therapy, LDL-C on admission was corrected according to type of agents: statin (+30%), ezetimibe (+20%), statin and ezetimibe (+40%). The choice for a conservative correction factor for statin therapy (+30%) is driven by the preferential use of moderate intensity statin in France. The presence of tendon xanthomas or corneal arcus, family history of hypercholesterolemia or vascular disease were not recorded in the database. Missing information was counted as zero, as done in previous studies [6,9,15]. A probable/definite FH diagnosis was considered when the DLCN score was ≥ 6, a possible diagnosis when the score was 3-5 and unlikely when the score was < 3 points. The group of patients with probable/definite FH was compared with the group unlikely FH, called "no"FH.

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Statistical analysis

Characteristics of patients are presented as median (interquartile range) for continuous variables and number (percentage) for categorical variables. Dichotomous variables were expressed as n(%) and continuous variables as median [interquartile range]. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to analyse the normality of continuous variables. Mann-Whitney test was used to compare continuous data, and the Chi 2 test or Fisher's test was used for dichotomous data. The threshold for significance was set at 5%. In addition to the full cohort, a matched subset was built, with one FH patient matched with three patients without FH,

based on age (±SD in whole population), sex and diabetes mellitus. For matching data, the Wilcoxon test was used instead of the Mann-Whitney test. SPSS version 12.0.1 (IBM Inc,

USA) was used for all of the statistical tests.

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RESULTS

- Among 11624 patients hospitalized for acute MI, 249 (2.1%) had a probable/definite FH
- 131 (score \geq 6), 2405 (20.7%) a possible FH (score 3-5) and 8970 (77.2%) no FH (score < 3).
- The baseline characteristics of patients with (probable/definite) FH and without (no) FH are
- reported on *Table 1* for the whole population (called "Full cohort") and for the 2 matched
- cohorts built after adjustment for age, sex and diabetes (called "Matched subset").
- The "probable/definite" FH groups was \approx 20 years younger (p<.001), had a higher BMI
- 136 (p=.016), a greater prevalence of smoking (p<.001), premature CAD (p<.001), family history
- of CAD (p<.001), but a lower prevalence of diabetes (p=.007), hypertension (p<.001) and
- 138 stroke (p=.016). However after adjustment for age, sex and diabetes, the prevalence of
- hypertension was higher for patients with probable/definite FH (p=.002), and the history of
- stroke does not differ between the two groups, whereas patients with probable/definite FH
- have more history of peripheral artery disease (p=.018). After adjustment, the proportion of
- smokers was similar in the two groups.
- As expected, median LDL-C was about twice as high (207 vs 112 mg/dL) for patients with
- 144 probable/definite FH and more patients with probable/definite FH were receiving lipid-
- lowering medications. However chronic statin treatment was only used in 48% of
- probable/definite FH patients and only 8% were receiving ezetimibe. The characteristics of
- the untreated versus treated patients with probable/definite FH are summarized on Suppl.
- Table 1: globally, a treatment was more frequent for the categories of patients at the highest
- risk (higher prevalence of patients with previous CAD, with diabetes and with hypertension
- for patients on lipid-lowering treatment). Patients with probable/definite FH and previous CAD
- are more likely to receive either statin therapy (84% in the full cohort and 87% in the matched
- subset) or ezetimibe treatment (25% in the full cohort and 32% in the matched subset). On
- the other hand, the coronary angiography data are similar in FH patients with and without
- 154 treatment.
- 155 Table 2 shows data on coronary lesions at coronary angiography and Table 3 data on in-
- hospital outcomes. After adjustment (post-matching data), the use of coronary angiography
- was similar for patients with and without FH. The GRACE risk score was lower for patients
- with probable/definite FH in both pre- and post-matched cohorts. However, after adjustment
- 159 for age, sex and diabetes, patients with probable/definite FH were characterized by
- increased extent of CAD (SYNTAX score 11 vs 7, p<.001) (Figure 1) and multivessel disease

(55% vs 40%, p<.001) (*Figure 2*) (*Table 2*). After adjustment, no significant differences appear on in-hospital outcomes (*Table 3*).

DISCUSSION

FH subjects are at high risk for acute MI, and characterization of CAD burden and FH pre valence in MI population are key issues for management strategies. In this large population-based study, we show that about 2% of acute MI patients had FH, and these patients were characterized by their young age, severity of CAD disease and dramatic underuse of lipid-lowering therapies.

As patients with FH have an increased risk of CAD compared to unaffected individuals, the prevalence of FH in patients hospitalized for an acute MI should be higher than estimated in the general Western populations (ie. 1 to 250 individuals). The prevalence of FH has not yet been reported in French patients hospitalized for ACS and in the present study, we show a prevalence 5-fold higher among patients hospitalized for an acute MI compared with the expected prevalence in the general population. The prevalence of 2.1% of probable/definite FH in this large database is in excellent agreement with data obtained in Switzerland (1.6% in the SPUM-ACS cohort) [6] and in Denmark (2.0% in patients with first MI) [10]. The higher prevalence reported in Australia by Pang et al. [8] could be due to the larger correction factor used for adjustment of LDL-C in individuals on statins associated with a larger use of statins (68% vs 48%). Indeed the mean correction factor was 2.0 in the study from Pang et al. [8] and only 1.48 in our study. The high prevalence (8.3%) found in EUROASPIRE IV [7] could be a reflection of the differences in recruitment methodology. As for the Danish cohort [10], all patients hospitalized for an acute MI were included in our consecutive study.

A study conducted in the Arabian Gulf using the same corrected factor for prior statin use has reported a higher prevalence 3.7% [12], close to Chinese data [11,13]. An elevated rate of consanguinity among Gulf citizens has been suggested as explanation [12]. As already reported in several cohorts [2], the characteristics of patients with FH hospitalized for MI differ from patients without FH: they were younger (20 years younger in our cohort), had a higher prevalence of premature CAD and family history of CAD, and had lower incidence of diabetes. A lower prevalence of diabetes in FH has been well described in the Netherlands by comparing FH patients and their non-affected relatives [23]. In our study, after adjustment for age, sex and diabetes, patients with FH were more frequently hypertensive and had a higher prevalence of peripheral artery disease, in agreement with an increased risk recently reported for FH patients [24]. The GRACE risk score was found lower for patients with FH, even after adjustment, in agreement with other reports [12,14].

Patients with FH hospitalized for ACS or MI have a worse prognosis as already described in several populations, with an approximate 2-fold increased risk for recurrence of coronary or

other cardiovascular events [12,14,15]. By contrast, few data are available on the severity of the disease at the time of admission in a CCU: in a small cohort of 16 patients with FH compared to 27 non-FH patients, Yasuda et al. [16] reported that the FH group more frequently had multiple-vessel disease while the non-FH group was likely to have single-vessel disease. Multivessel CAD was also found more common in two other studies, however conducted in patients with only possible FH [9,13]. Recently, Li et al. [25] have used the Gensini scoring system to assess the severity of CAD and reported an increase in the severity of CAD in Chinese patients with FH. Our data from a large cohort show a significant increase of multivessel CAD in patients with probable/definite FH versus no FH patients. Moreover, the severity of CAD for FH patients is confirmed by a significant increase of the SYNTAX Score. These results were observed despite a greater use of statin therapy in the FH group, and reflected the high cumulative LDL-C burden associated with FH. Several limitations need to be considered in the present study: First, there are missing data

Several limitations need to be considered in the present study: First, there are missing data regarding the presence of tendon xanthomas or corneal arcus, and high cholesterol levels in the first degree family members; therefore the prevalence can be underestimated. The genetic testing was not performed to confirm the FH diagnosis. Nevertheless, our procedure for identifying FH has been employed in numerous previous publications [6-15]. Second, the statin doses were not reported in this study and the LDL-C levels for FH diagnosis might have a degree of bias. However, we have adjusted LDL-C levels by a relatively low correction factor corresponding to a 30% LDL-C decrease on statin treatment to avoid an overestimation of patients with probable/definite FH. Moreover, we have only compared patients with probable/definite FH with patients unlikely FH. In addition to the size of the cohort, a strength of this study is the recruitment of all consecutive patients hospitalized for an acute MI in a French region.

CONCLUSIONS

In a large cohort from a French region, we found a high prevalence of FH in real world patients hospitalized for an acute MI. Patients with FH were associated with a greater severity of CAD burden. Despite a greater use of lipid-lowering therapy compared with patients without FH, about half of patients with FH were not receiving statin therapy before the acute event. This study confirms that FH is underdiagnosed and undertreated and strategies to optimize the identification and the management of FH patients should be advocated.

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- 240 <u>Authors' contributions</u>
- MF, HY, PB, DB contributed to the conception or design of the work.
- FC, MM, FB, PB, DB contributed to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the
- 243 work.
- 244 MF, MZ drafted the manuscript.
- 245 MZ, YC, FC, critically revised the manuscript.
- JCB, CSV, YC, MZ finally approved the manuscript
- 247 All authors approved the present article.

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Figure 1: Severity of CAD assessed by SYNTAX Score for patients with and without FH

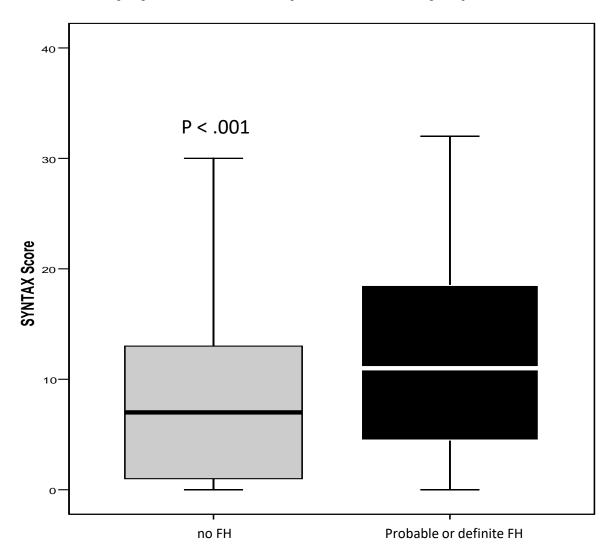


Figure 2: Number of significant coronary lesions for patients with and without FH

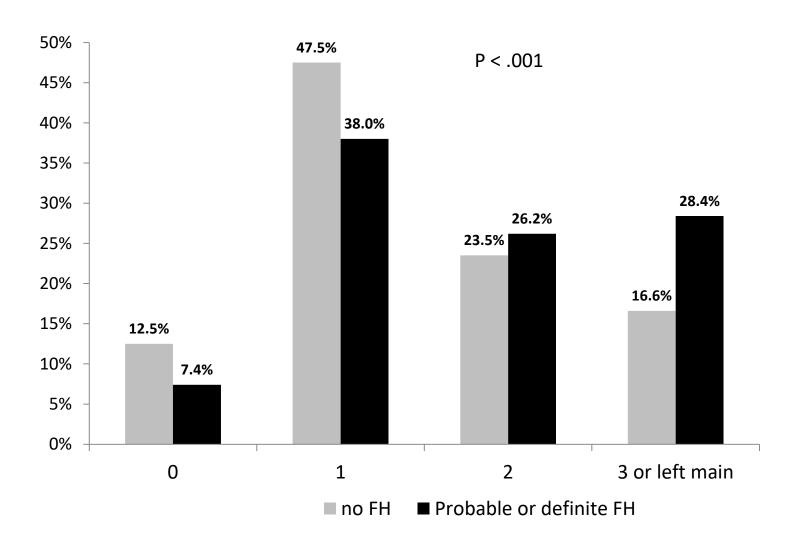


Table 1: Characteristics of patients at admission for acute MI with and without FH: data from full cohort and matched subset

		Full cohort			Matched subset			
n (%) or median (IQR)	no FH	Probable/definite FH	Р	no FH	Probable/definite FH	Р		
	(n=8970)	(n=249)	value	(n=699)	(n=233)	value		
Patient characteristics								
Age (years)	71 (61-80)	51 (46-57)	<.001	51 (46-57)	51 (46-57)	.993		
Female	2799 (31%)	78 (31%)	.967	216 (31%)	72 (31%)	1		
BMI (kg/m²)	26 (24-29)	27 (24-30)	.016	26 (23-30)	27 (24-30)	.092		
Diabetes	2215 (25%)	43 (17%)	.007	117 (17%)	39 (17%)	1		
Hypertension	5304 (59%)	117 (47%)	<.001	243 (35%)	107 (46%)	.002		
Current smoking	2098 (23%)	140 (56%)	<.001	390 (56%)	128 (55%)	.819		
<u>Comorbidities</u>								
Previous CAD*	1290/8909 (15%)	49/248 (20%)	.020	50/687 (7%)	37/232 (16%)	<.001		
Premature CAD	1207/8304 (15%)	201/245 (82%)	<.001	535/687 (78%)	188/229 (82%)	.175		
Family history of CAD	1619 (18%)	195 (78%)	<.001	33 (5%)	184 (79%)	<.001		
Stroke	693/8910 (8%)	9/247 (4%)	.016	28/695 (4%)	7/231 (3%)	.491		
PAD	479/8914 (8%)	20/247 (8%)	.864	23/696 (3%)	16/231 (7%)	.018		
Lipid-lowering medications								
Statins	2078 (23%)	119 (48%)	<.001	91 (13%)	107 (46%)	<.001		
Ezetimibe	156 (2%)	20 (8%)	<.001	5 (1%)	20 (9%)	<.001		
Fibrates	490 (6%)	4 (2%)	.008	38 (5%)	4 (2%)	.018		
Biological data								
TC (mg/dL)	184 (156-212)	284 (255-320)	<.001	190 (165-210)	284 (255-320)	<.001		
LDL-C (mg/dL)	112 (88-136)	207 (175-241)	<.001	118 (96-136)	207 (176-238)	<.001		
Corrected LDL-C ≥ 190 mg/dL	0	248 (99.6%)	<.001	0	232 (99.6%)	<.001		
HDL-C (mg/dL)	44 (36-54)	43 (36-52)	.354	41 (33-51)	43 (36-52)	.021		
TG (mg/dL)	114 (82-162)	152 (114-219)	<.001	131 (90-191)	150 (113-217)	<.001		
Clinical data								
Blood pressure (BP), mmHg								
Systolic BP	139 (120-159)	140 (126-161)	.018	134 (119-153)	140 (126-161)	<.001		
, Diastolic BP	80 (69-90)	85 (76-99)	<.001	80 (70-94)	85 (77-99) [′]	<.001		
LVEF (%)	53 (43-60)	55 (45-61)	.039	55 (45-61)	55 (45-62)	.905		
Heart failure	2291 (26%)	42 (17%)	.002	100 (14%)	37 (16%)	.557		
STEMI	4841 (54%)	130 (52%)	.580	420 (60%)	123 (53%)	.050		

^{*} Previous CAD: previous MI, unstable angina, coronary artery bypass grafting or percutaneous coronary intervention

TC: total cholesterol; LDL-C: LDL cholesterol; HDL-C: HDL cholesterol; TG: triglycerides; STEMI: ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction; PAD: peripheral artery disease; BMI: body mass index; IQR: interquartile range; LVEF: left ventricular ejection fraction

Table 2: Coronary lesions for patients with and without FH: data from full cohort and matched subset

	F	ull cohort	Matched subset			
n (%) or median (IQR)	no FH	Probable/ definite FH	р	no FH	Probable/	р
	(n=8970)	(n=249)	value	(n=699)	definite FH (n=233)	value
Coronary angiography	8465 (94%)	244 (98%)	.014	682 (98%)	229 (98%)	.524
GRACE risk score	151 (128-177)	112 (96-134)	<.001	118 (102-140)	111 (97-134)	.015
SYNTAX score	10 (5-18)	11 (5-19)	.622	7 (1-13)	11 (4-19)	<.001
Multivessel disease	4504/8465 (54%)	134/244 (55%)	.691	273/682 (40%)	125/229 (55%)	<.001

Table 3: In-hospital outcomes for patients with and without FH: data from full cohort and matched subset

	Full cohort			Matched subset			
n (%)	no FH	Probable/ definite FH	p value	no FH	Probable/ definite FH	p value	
	(n=8970)	(n=249)		(n=699)	(n=233)		
Recurrent MI	466 (5.2%)	11 (4.4%)	.584	42 (6.0%)	10 (4.3%)	.323	
Stroke or TIA	129 (1.4%)	3 (1.2%)	1	4 (0.6%)	3 (1.3%)	.376	
CV death	483 (5.4%)	3 (1.2%)	.004	17 (2.4%)	3 (1.3%)	.296	
Death	546 (6.1%)	3 (1.2%)	.001	18 (2.6%)	3 (1.3%)	.251	
Heart failure	2842 (32%)	50 (20%)	<.001	127 (18%)	45 (19%)	.697	