About CHIVA and ESVS guidelines 2015

Bahnini A (1)., Cappelli M (2) Ermini S (3) ., Escribano JM.(4), Franceschi C.(5), Juan J.(6), Mendoza E(7)., Pares O.(8) , Passariello F.(9), Zamboni P (10)

Key words: varicose veins; CHIVA; chronic venous insufficiency; ulcer; venous by-pass

As CHIVA European association, here are our comment about the ESVS guidelines (Eur J Vasc Endovasc Surg (2015) 49, 678e737)

The guidelines authors wrote: “In another study [2] all stripping procedures were done under general or epidural anaesthesia whereas the CHIVA treatments were performed under local anaesthesia, which acted as a confounder for the evaluation of the post-operative side effects.” In fact, Stripping procedures were done only under epidural anaesthesia that lasted not more than 2 hours, which didn’t impact the side effects assessed along 8-10 days following the operation which were defined as DVP, PE, hematomas, bruises, saphenous nerve injury, pain and days of convalescence. In addition, the potential effect of epidural anaesthesia respect to CHIVA as thromboembolism didn’t occur. So the different types of anaesthesia didn’t interfere with the statistical analysis of the results. On another hand the post operative treatments were identical in CHIVA and Stripping groups.

The guidelines authors state: “The most serious limiting concerns in both studies were how “failure” by recurrence was defined: it is unclear if the presence of visible recurrent varicose veins or the presence of refluxing veins during the DUS evaluation or both were considered to define the failure of the treatment”. In the Carandina et al[1] and Pares et al [2] RCTs the first-level research variable of intention-to-treat analysis were the clinically visible varicose veins caliber evaluated at 5 years follow-up according to Hobbs classification, so independently of the flow direction. This includes "absent or non visible recurrence" (patient clinically cured) and "visible recurrence" (patient in situation of clinical failure), with or without a simple reflux point. Duplex ultrasonography imaging was used to study the location of recurrence by examining different anatomic types of shunts. In this regard, we must remind that after a CHIVA procedure, a “refluxing vein” is not an hemodynamic failure if its caliber is normalized and it is no more overloaded by new or redo escape point. Moreover this is not a reflux with recirculation from the deep vein, but a footward drainage of the natural tributaries of the saphenous vein into a perforator.

2 important references are not cited in this review: 1 additional RCT reference CHIVA vs Stripping published in 2006 [2] and A Cochrane Review [5] published on 2013 , both favorable to CHIVA.

The recommendation 54 is restricted to physicians exclusively performing CHIVA without any explanation. Does that mean that CHIVA performers are the only physicians able to perform CHIVA and unable to perform any other treatment and vice versa ? A clear explanation is needed.

The fact that CHIVA preserves in all cases the GSV, should be stressed as it is with compression the only treatment which allows the possibility of future arterial by-pass (still performed and vital despite the endo-vascular procedures progresses) [5].

These considerations should increase the current ESVS recommendation 54 grade higher than IIb B.

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1-Bahnini Amine mine Cardio-Vascular Department, American Hospital of Paris Neuilly/seine

2-Cappelli Massimo Private Centro vena Florence Italy

3- Ermini Stefano Private Vein Surgery Florence Italy

4-Escribano Jose Maria Vascular Surgery, Val Ebron Hospital Barcelona Spain

5-Franceschi Claude Centre Marie Thérèse Saint Joseph Paris France

6- Juan Samso Jorge Surgery, Val Ebron Hospital Barcelona Spain

7- Mendoza Erika Venenpraxis Wunstorf, Germany

8- Pares Oriol Vascular Surgery, General Hospital Vic Spain

9-Passariello Fausto Vasculab Foundation ONLUS, Napoli, Italy

10- Zamboni Paolo Vascular surgery University of Ferrara Italy gmail

1-Bahnini Amine mine Cardio-Vascular Department, American Hospital of Paris Neuilly/seine

amine@bahnini.com

 +33616816060

2-Cappelli Massimo Private Centro vena Florence Italy

massimo.cappelli@dada.it

**+39 055 68 97 13**

3- Ermini Stefano Private Vein Surgery Florence Italy

info96507@gmail.com

**+393386741516**

4-Escribano Jose Maria Vascular Surgery, Val Ebron Hospital Barcelona Spain

josemariaescribano.jme@gmail.com

**+34606423188**

5-Franceschi Claude Centre Marie Thérèse Saint Joseph Paris France

+33687811610

Claude.franceschi@gmail.com

6-Juan Samso Jorge Surgery, Val Ebron Hospital Barcelona Spain

jorge.juan.samso@gmail.com

**+34696068003**

7-Mendoza Erika Venenpraxis Wunstorf, Germany

erika.mendoza@t-online.de

**+491732436531**8- Pares Oriol Vascular Surgery, General Hospital Vic Spain joparesrifa@gmail.com

afunzionale@tiscalinet.it

**+34679955038**

9-Passariello Fausto Vasculab Foundation ONLUS, Napoli, Italy

+393356250756

10-Zamboni Paolo Vascular surgery University of Ferrara Italy

zambo@unife.it

**+390532237694**