Tirofiban combined with Aspirin in the Treatment of Acute Penetrating Artery Territory Infarction (STRATEGY): protocol for a multicentre, randomised controlled trial

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ABSTRACT

Background Perforating artery territorial infarction (PAI) caused by branch atheromatous disease (BAD) is prone to recurrence and early progression without an effective and well-documented antiplatelet treatment regimen. Tirofiban, an adjunctive antiplatelet agent, has shown great potential to treat acute ischaemic stroke. However, whether the combination of tirofiban and aspirin can improve the prognosis of PAI remains unclear.

Aim To explore an effective and safe antiplatelet regimen for reducing the risk of recurrence and early neurological deterioration (END) in PAI caused by BAD by comparing the tirofiban and aspirin combination with placebo and aspirin combination.

Methods Tirofiban combined with Aspirin in the Treatment of Acute Penetrating Artery Territory Infarction (STRATEGY) trial is an ongoing multicentre, randomised, placebo-controlled trial in China. Eligible patients shall be randomly assigned to receive standard aspirin with tirofiban or placebo on the first day and standard aspirin from days 2 to 90. The primary endpoint is a new stroke or END within 90 days. The primary safety endpoint is severe or moderate bleeding within 90 days.

Discussion The STRATEGY trial will assess whether tirofiban combined with aspirin is effective and safe in preventing recurrence and END in patients with PAI.

Trial registration number NCT05310968.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Perforating artery territorial infarction (PAI) is a single small deep infarct caused by a perforating artery. This accounts for 15.3%–25% of all stroke cases. The annual recurrence and disability rates range between 2%–12% and 18%–33%, respectively. Apart from arterial dissection, embolism and other rare cases, PAI is mainly attributed to conditions involving the small artery with three different pathophysiological mechanisms, including lipohyalinosis, large parent artery plaque and microatheroma. Lipohyalinosis, a cerebral small-vessel disease, usually causes a true ‘lacunar infarct’ (diameter <15 mm). Large parent artery plaques involve perforating artery embolisms originating from unstable plaques of the parent artery with severe stenosis. Finally, branch atheromatous disease (BAD), caused by microatheroma, is indirectly defined by the radiological characteristics of ischaemic lesions identifiable by a diameter ≥15 mm, without severe stenosis of the parent artery.

Early neurological deterioration (END) and recurrence of stroke play important roles in adverse outcomes of PAI. Compared with lipohyalinosis, infarcts consequent to atherosclerosis are more likely to progress or recur, usually accompanied by increased infarct volume. Hence, effective antithrombotic therapy is essential for PAI prognosis. Dual
antiplatelet therapy is widely accepted as the first choice for infarcts with intracranial and extracranial artery stenosis of >30%. However, the efficacy of antithrombotic therapy for single infarcts without severe stenosis of the parent artery, that is, BAD-related PAI, is still uncertain. Based on the Secondary Prevention of Small Subcortical Strokes trial, aspirin-added clopidogrel could not significantly prevent the recurrence of lacunar infarctions measuring ≤20 mm, including lipohyalinosis and BAD. Moreover, the intervention time was within 6 months of stroke, which might exceed the END period. According to an analysis of a ‘Clopidogrel in High-risk patients with Acute Non-Disabling Cerebrovascular Events’ subgroup, for single infarctions (caused by large-artery atherosclerosis, small-artery occlusion and undetermined causes), dual antiplatelet therapy (clopidogrel plus aspirin) did not significantly reduce recurrence more than aspirin alone. Without refining the pathological and pathogenesis mechanisms, these studies could not prove the efficacy of antiplatelet drug monotherapy against PAI. A small, multicentre study found that in BAD, an ultra-early cilostazol combined with an oral antiplatelet agent could better restrain the clinical progression than that with single cilostazol, aspirin or clopidogrel. For atherosclerotic occlusion of small arteries, early tirofiban plus one oral antiplatelet drug could significantly reduce the National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS) score of patients who had disease progression. These studies have highlighted the effectiveness of dual antiplatelet treatment in PAI caused by BAD. However, they also have obvious limitations, such as a small sample size, retrospective or observational design, and inconsistent or inexplicit definitions of BAD. Therefore, a well-designed randomised controlled trial with sufficient samples is urgently required to explore better antithrombotic treatments for PAI caused by BAD.

Tirofiban, a selective and reversible antagonist of the glycoprotein (GP) IIb/IIIa receptor on the platelet, has been increasingly used to treat acute ischaemic stroke in recent years. The efficacy of intra-arterial injection of tirofiban was comparable with that of intracranial angioplasty/stenting for acute atherosclerotic occlusion of large artery. For acute middle cerebral artery infarction, recombinant tissue plasminogen activator (rt-PA) with tirofiban could reduce more lesions than rt-PA alone, suggesting tirofiban’s impact on thrombi in small vessels, induced by the recanalisation of upstream vessels. Meanwhile, aspirin is the first-line antiplatelet treatment in patients with atherosclerotic stroke, particularly in Asia. Combining tirofiban with aspirin stabilises platelet activation and inhibits thrombosis expansion by acting on various targets. Therefore, based on the hypothesis that tirofiban and aspirin combination could safely reduce the risk of stroke recurrence and END of acute PAI due to BAD within 90 days, compared with single aspirin, we designed the ‘Tirofiban combined with Aspirin in the Treatment of Acute Penetrating Artery Territory Infarction (STRATEGY)’ trial.

**METHODS**

**Design**

This is a randomised, double-blind, parallel, placebo-controlled, multicentre trial (figure 1). Within 48 hours of onset, all participants shall be randomly assigned to one of two groups, and tirofiban plus aspirin or tirofiban placebo plus aspirin will be administered, with a 90-day follow-up. This study is expected to last for 24 months. We have checked the design through the Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials checklist for standardisation.

**Participants**

Participants are being recruited from 39 centres in China. Patients with persistent neurological deficits will be screened by study criteria (box 1).
Box 1  Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria
1. Eighteen to 80 years old.
2. Male or female.
3. No more than 48 hours after onset.
4. Clinical manifestations indicating infarction of penetrating artery territory (no cortical or multiple infarctions, NIHSS score ≤10 and consciousness-1 score ≤1).
5. Diffusion-weighted image suggesting single infarction (maximum diameter <30 mm) of penetrating artery territory, which involves two or more transverse layers, or whose maximum diameter ≥15 mm, or connected to the ventral surface of the pons but not crossing the midline.
6. With stenosis of <70% of the parent artery.
7. Signed informed consent by the patient or his/her legal agent.

Exclusion criteria
1. History of intracranial haemorrhage.
2. History of intracranial tumours, vascular malformation or aneurysm.
3. Emergency intravascular intervention or intravenous thrombolysis before randomisation.
4. Being on dual antiplatelet therapy, or having received dual antiplatelet therapy within 14 days prior to randomisation (excluding use of aspirin with non-loaded clopidogrel after onset).
5. Having received other antiplatelet drugs, or anticoagulant drugs, or defibrilate treatments after onset.
6. Indications for long-term use of antiplatelet drugs (not for research) or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
7. With stenosis of >70% of the parent artery.
8. Definite indications for anticoagulant treatment (eg, suspected cardioembolism) or dual antiplatelet treatment (eg, recent endovascular stent implantation).
9. Severe hepatic dysfunction (ALT or AST > three times the normal upper limit) or severe renal dysfunction (creatinine clearance rate <30 mL/min) before randomisation.
10. Haemorrhagic tendency (such as platelet count <100×10^9/L; heparin treatment within 48 hours; activated partial thromboplastin time >35 s; current use of warfarin, international normalised ratio >1.7; current use of novel oral anticoagulants; current use of direct thrombin or factor Xa inhibitor).
11. Resistant hypertension (SBP >180 mm Hg or DBP >110 mm Hg after antihypertensive therapy).
12. History of obvious head trauma within 3 months of randomisation.
13. History of intracranial or intraspinal surgery within 3 months of randomisation.
14. History of major surgery or severe physical trauma within 1 month of randomisation.
15. Severe neurological defects (modified Rankin Scale ≥2) before onset.
17. Haemorrhagic retinopathy.
18. Women of childbearing age without effective contraceptive methods and negative pregnancy tests.
19. Known to be allergic to tirofiban.
20. Discontinuance of trial drugs due to planned surgical or interventional treatment within 3 months.
21. Expected survival time within 6 months due to any terminal illness.
22. Undergoing other trial drugs or instruments.
23. Other conditions unsuitable for this study, such as having mental diseases, cognitive or mood disturbance, and could not comply with research procedures or with MRI contraindications.

ALT, alanine aminotransferase; AST, aspartate aminotransferase; DBP, diastolic blood pressure; NIHSS, National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale; SBP, systolic blood pressure.

Randomisation
The drugs were packed according to the random code list, which was generated by random permuted blocks with fixed size. Each centre will assign random codes and corresponding treatment kits to eligible patients in an ascending order. Patients will be treated with tirofiban or placebo, and the ratio of the random probability of being assigned to the two groups is 1:1.

To ensure blinding, drug assignments are concealed in sealed envelopes. The treatment and control drugs are identical in appearance. The research centres are equipped with specific personnel injecting drugs, who will not participate in drug administration. The personnel involved in the subject screening, efficacy and safety evaluation, and clinical research organisation data processing will be blinded to the randomisation, preparation and drug administration processes. Unblinding is permitted when an endpoint or adverse event occurs if knowing the composition of the drug is necessary for subsequent treatment. Investigators could open the envelope with approval of the sponsor.

Interventions
Patients who have passed the criteria screening will be included in the trial (table 1). The tirofiban group (tirofiban plus aspirin group) will receive tirofiban continuously for 24.5 hours and 100–300 mg aspirin on the first day of enrolment (to ensure that 300 mg aspirin is administered on the day of onset or the first day of enrolment). Tirofiban hydrochloride will be injected intravenously at...
1. Secondar

Endpoints

Primary endpoints
1. New-onset stroke within 90±7 days.
2. END within 90±7 days.

Secondary endpoints
1. New-onset stroke or END within 7±1 days and 24±2 hours.

2. Composite vascular events (recurrence of symptomatic stroke, myocardial infarction and vascular death) within 90±7 days.
3. Disability or death (mRS score between 2 and 6 points) within 90±7 days.
4. Improvement of neurological function (decrease of NIHSS score by ≥4 points compared with the baseline or NIHSS score of 0–1 point) within 90±7 days, 7±1 days and 24±2 hours.
5. The score based on the EuroQol-5 dimension-5 Level Scale on 90±7 days.

Safety endpoints

The safety endpoints include the occurrence of the following events within 90±7 days:
1. Moderate or severe bleeding events defined by Global Utilisation of Streptokinase and Tissue Plasminogen Activator for Occluded Coronary Arteries Criteria. 19
2. Symptomatic and asymptomatic intracranial haemorrhage defined by Heidelberg Bleeding Classification. 20
4. Overall death.
5. Adverse event and serious adverse events (platelet count ≤100×10^9/L, hypersensitivity, renal failure).

Relevant detailed definitions for all above events are shown in online supplemental table 2.

Sample size calculation

We assumed the incidence of the primary endpoint rate to be 20% and 13.3% in the control group 7,21 and tirofiban group, 22–24 respectively, which implied a 30% reduction in relative risk. Considering a testing power of 80% and a significance level of 5%, 970 patients (485 in each group) will be required, allowing for a 5% dropout rate. We used Power Analysis and Sample Size software V.11.0 (NCSS, Kaysville, Utah, USA) to calculate.

Statistical analyses

According to intention-to-treat principle, participants with at least one record of medication and efficacy evaluation will be included in the full analysis set. Whenever a participant is lost to follow-up, or dropped out of the study, the last observed value is substituted as each value of subsequent time points. The proportion of participants with new-onset stroke or END at 90±7 days will be presented as frequency (percentage) and compared using the χ² test. The ORs and 95% CIs will be calculated by logistic regression. The cumulative risk of stroke or vascular events at 90±7 days will be characterised by Kaplan-Meier survival curves. The risk factors, the HR and 95% CI will be explored and calculated by Cox proportional hazards model. Efficacy will be evaluated using the log-rank test. The influence of age, sex, comorbidity, stenosis of parent artery, intracranial microhaemorrhage, inflammatory markers and sites of infarction on treatment will be assessed through the subgroup

0.4 μg/kg/min for the first 30 min and 0.1 μg/kg/min for the next 24 hours. From days 2 to 90, the patients will receive 100 mg aspirin per day.

The control group (tirofiban placebo plus aspirin group) will receive tirofiban placebo for 24.5 hours continuously, and 100–300 mg aspirin on the first day of enrolment (to ensure 300 mg aspirin is administered on the day of onset or the first day of enrolment). A weight-dependent dose tirofiban placebo will be injected intravenously similar to that of tirofiban. From days 2 to 90, the patients will receive 100 mg aspirin per day.

In addition to the study medication, other necessary treatment and concomitant care will be permitted in all participants.

Study organisation

In-person visits with participants will be performed separately at baseline, 24±2 hours, 7±1 days, discharge day and 90±7 days. Participants with newly occurring neurological clinical symptoms or suspicious events, including deterioration of the original ischaemic event and transient or persistent neurological symptoms, will undergo additional interviews. The NIHSS scores will be recorded at baseline, 24±2 hours, 7±1 days and 90±7 days. The modified Rankin Scale (mRS) scores will be recorded at baseline and 90±7 days. Fasting venous blood samples at early morning will be collected within 24±2 hours of randomisation. MRI should be completed at baseline and event interviews. In the high-resolution MRI (HR-MRI) or 7T-MRI subgroup, special sequences of MRI will be conducted on 7±1 days. The study plan is detailed in online supplemental table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tirofiban</td>
<td>The first day after randomisation</td>
<td>Tirofiban (weight-dependent dose)+aspirin 100–300 mg*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Days 2–90</td>
<td>Aspirin 100 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>The first day after randomisation</td>
<td>Tirofiban placebo+aspirin 100–300 mg*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Days 2–90</td>
<td>Aspirin 100 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To ensure that 300 mg aspirin is administered on the day of onset or the first day of enrolment.

...
analyses. Changes in NIHSS scores between every visit and the baseline will be summarised for the two groups and tested by Student’s t-test or Mann-Whitney U test. Statistical analyses will be accomplished using SAS software V.9.4 (SAS Institute).

**Data Safety and Monitoring Board**

The Data Safety and Monitoring Board (DSMB) is comprised of academic experts and statisticians independent of the trial implementation process. DSMB charters, including membership, roles and responsibilities, will be certified by its members and executive committee. The DSMB will regularly monitor to ensure ethical procedures and patient safety, and have access to the final trial dataset.

**Data management and quality control**

Data will be transmitted through the electronic data capture system (http://study.ericure.com) based on the electronic case report forms (CRFs) of this study, after proofreading and correction by data managers. The principal investigators of all subcentres should be certified in Good Clinical Practice. Clinical inspectors shall visit the subcentres regularly to ensure strict adherence to the protocol and consistency of the original and CRF data.

**Criteria for study withdrawal**

Participants are able to withdraw voluntarily without any justification at any time. If the participants develop conditions unfit for the further study, investigators shall decide to withdraw them from the trial.

**DISCUSSION**

The STRATEGY Study is the first large sample, multicentre, randomised controlled trial to evaluate the efficacy and safety of tirofiban–aspirin versus aspirin antiplatelet therapy for PAI caused by BAD, using MRI-based evaluation.

There are few studies on PAI, and even fewer studies on BAD-related factors. In prior studies, the various definitions of MRI-based BAD might indirectly doubt the efficacy of antiplatelet therapy.\(^\text{12-14}\) Considering the pathogenesis, this study will define BAD based on the MRI characteristics and try to exclude infarcts caused by hyaline arterioles which did not require dual antiplatelet therapy and those accompanied by obvious stenosis requiring dual antiplatelet or interventional therapy.

The administration of dual or triple antiplatelet\(^\text{14-16}\) or antiplatelet combined with anticoagulant therapies\(^\text{25}\) at an early stage can inhibit the episode of stroke warning syndrome or END of patients with BAD; however, a generally accepted antithrombotic regimen is unavailable. Recently, tirofiban has been used to treat ischaemic stroke, sometimes in combination with oral antiplatelet drugs, intravenous thrombolytic therapy and endovascular therapy. It can reversibly combine with GPIIb/IIIa receptors, inhibiting platelet aggregation rather than dissolving thrombi, thereby effectively suppressing microthrombi.\(^\text{26}\) According to the result of the Safety of Tirofiban in Acute Ischaemic Stroke trial, tirofiban administration within 3–22 hours of ischaemic stroke onset could reduce the mortality rate over the next 5 months without increasing the risk of intracranial haemorrhage.\(^\text{27}\) For stroke warning syndrome, which tends to develop into PAI, tirofiban plus oral antiplatelet drugs can stop early symptomatic fluctuations and promote neurological function recovery as soon as possible.\(^\text{16}\) Notably, in progressive stroke, the improvement in neurological symptoms is more significant in small-vessel occlusion than that in large-vessel occlusion after tirofiban treatment.\(^\text{15}\) Therefore, early intensive dual antiplatelet therapy can potentially prevent the progression or recurrence of PAI caused by BAD, with tirofiban being a suitable antiplatelet drug. The incidence of symptom progression was 13.5%–41% within 3 days–3 weeks of stroke onset,\(^\text{6-9}\) and 23.9%–38.1% within 48 hours,\(^\text{28-30}\) indicating that most END happened within 48 hours after stroke onset. According to studies of tirofiban in ischaemic stroke, the risk of bleeding increased with the duration of medication (see online supplemental table 3). In the STRATEGY Study, tirofiban is used to prevent stroke progression. Considering the time window for progression and bleeding risk, we suggest combining intravenous tirofiban with oral aspirin for 24 hours at an early stage (within 48 hours of onset). Meanwhile, due to the high risk of PAI progression, both recurrent stroke and END were considered as primary endpoints in this study, thus allowing a more rigorous evaluation of efficacy.

The strengths of this study are as follows: first, the sample size was calculated based on conservative data, making it larger than that used in similar previous studies. In addition, confounding and selection biases are well controlled through randomisation and multicentre implementation. Second, the participants will be screened using MRI-based inclusion criteria, thus excluding patients without BAD. The aetiology and pathogenesis of acute progressive PAI and the different efficacies of tirofiban intensive antiplatelet therapy for different types of PAI will be assessed using HR-MRI and 7T-MRI. Finally, we will continue to follow up until 3 months after the onset, which will allow us to examine both early progression and long-term recurrence of the disease, particularly using dual antiplatelet therapy.

BAD is encountered frequently, but existing treatment strategies lack evidence-based clinical practice, and efficient antithrombotic therapy has not yet been established. The results of the STRATEGY trial will be expected to help find an effective and safe dual antiplatelet treatment option for PAI caused by BAD.
Project management
The steering committee will be responsible for trial design and executing guidance. The executive committee will supervise the progress of the study, especially data collection. The adjudication committee is comprised of external experts who will review the endpoints and adverse events and make the final decision. The site study investigators will recruit patients, collect data and report clinical events. The National Clinical Research Center for Neurological Diseases of China will conduct randomisation, data quality control and statistical analysis.

Trial status
This trial was recruiting patients when the manuscript was submitted. The first patient was enrolled on 15 November 2022.

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Contributors
YW, XL, HQ, XZ, LL, YP and WC. Conceived the project—YW, YoW, XL, HQ, XZ, LL, YP and WC. Study supervision and organisation of the project—YilW, YoW, XL, HQ, XZ, LL, YP and WC.

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Disclaimer
The principal investigator and executive committee will have full access to the entire dataset at trial completion and will be responsible for analysis and publication, in collaboration with the sponsor.

Competing interests
None declared.

Patient consent for publication
Not required.

Ethics approval
This study involves human participants and was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Beijing Tiantan Hospital (KY 2021-089-08). Participants gave informed consent to participate in the study before taking part.

Provenance and peer review
Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

Data availability statement
Data sharing not applicable as no datasets generated and/or analysed for this study.

Supplemental material
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REFERENCES


### Supplemental Table S1. Study Procedure of STRATEGY trial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Screening and randomization</th>
<th>Treatment period</th>
<th>event follow-up</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; visit</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; visit</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; visit</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endpoints</td>
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<td>Evaluation of intracranial and extracranial arteries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination of cardiac structure and function</td>
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<td>Radiographic reexamination</td>
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<tr>
<td>AE/SAEs</td>
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Notes:
1. The following laboratory tests must be completed during screening: complete blood count (CBC), hepatic function, renal function, blood coagulation function.
2. The following laboratory tests should be completed within 24h after randomization [including CBC, biochemical panel (including hepatic and renal function, blood lipids and creatine kinase), C-reaction protein, glycated hemoglobin, homocysteine, coagulation function].
3. Fasting venous blood samples should be collected within 24 hours after randomization (if not, 72 hours after randomization is the final deadline). Serum, plasma and leukocytes should be extracted and cryopreserved separately.
4. Radiographic evaluations, including brain MRI and MRA (or CTA), should be completed before randomization to observe cerebral infarction and parent artery. Brain MRI should be scanned at magnetic field intensity of at least 1.5 Tesla with slice thickness of 5 mm and slice gap of 6 mm. T1+T2+FLAIR+DWI/ADC sequences is necessary. T2* gradient echo (GRE-T2*) or susceptibility-weighted imaging (SWI) sequence is optional, depending on MRI devices of sub-centres. Baseline and follow-up imaging should be performed on the same device.
5. Evaluation of intracranial arteries includes any one of MRA, CTA, or DSA; evaluation of extracranial arteries includes any one of carotid artery ultrasound, CEMRA, supra-arch CTA and DSA. All the imaging data should be collected as DICOM (except for carotid artery ultrasound required to be photographed) form and uploaded.
6. Examination of cardiac structure and function includes cardiac ultrasonography and Holter.
7. Brain MR or CT should be finished when endpoint events occur to exam progressive stroke, recurrence of stroke or intracranial hemorrhage. Brain MRI (including T1+T2+FLAIR+DWI/ADC sequences) and MRA are the first choice.
**Supplemental Table S2. Definitions of stroke events and vascular events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New-onset stroke</td>
<td>Acute symptoms and signs of neurologic defect caused by sudden abnormality of the blood supply. Damage of focal or whole brain, spinal or retinal vascular damage, which is related to cerebral circulation disorder. Both ischaemic stroke and haemorrhagic stroke are classified in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ischemic stroke</td>
<td>Definitions: (1) Symptoms or imaging evidence of acute newly onset focal neurologic deficit last for more than 24 hours after excluding other non-ischemic reasons, such as brain infection, head trauma, brain tumour, epilepsy, severe metabolic diseases, degeneration diseases or adverse effect of medications; or (2) Acute brain or retinal ischemic event with focal symptoms or signs lasts for less than 24 hours after excluding other causes with imaging evidence of new infarction; or (3) Progression of original vascular ischemic stroke (NIHSS increased ≥ 4 from baseline score after excluding haemorrhagic transformation or symptomatic intracerebral haemorrhage after cerebral infarction) lasts over 24 hours with new ischemic lesion on brain MRI or CT, which would be classified by TOAST aetiology standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemorrhagic stroke</td>
<td>Haemorrhagic stroke was defined as focal or whole brain or spine damage caused by non-traumatic bleeding into the brain parenchyma, intraventricular or subarachnoid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early neurological deterioration</td>
<td>The NIHSS score increasing by ≥ 2 points, or the score of hemiplegia increasing by ≥ 1 point, or the score of conscious disturbance increasing by ≥ 1 point compared with baseline within 7 days of onset. Intracranial haemorrhage can be determined by performing CT or MRI, and exacerbations not attributable to stroke such as cardiac, liver, and renal failure, among others are excluded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myocardial infarction</td>
<td>Third universal definition of myocardial infarction (Thygesen 2012) The term acute myocardial infarction (MI) should be used when there is evidence of myocardial necrosis in a clinical setting consistent with acute myocardial ischemia. Under these conditions any one of the following criteria meets the diagnosis for MI: 1. Detection of a rise and/or fall of cardiac biomarker values (preferably cardiac troponin [cTn]) with at least one value above the 99th percentile upper reference limit (URL) and with at least one of the following: (1) Symptoms of ischemia. (2) New or presumed new significant ST-segment–T wave (ST–T) changes or new left bundle branch block (LBBB). (3) Development of pathological Q waves in the ECG. (4) Imaging evidence of new loss of viable myocardium or new regional wall motion abnormality. (5) Identification of an intracoronary thrombus by angiography or autopsy. 2. Cardiac death with symptoms suggestive of myocardial ischemia and...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presumed new ischemic ECG changes or new LBBB, but death occurred before cardiac biomarkers were obtained, or before cardiac biomarker values would be increased.

3. Percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) related MI is arbitrarily defined by elevation of cTn values (>5×99th percentile URL) in patients with normal baseline values (≤99th percentile URL) or a rise of cTn values >20% if the baseline values are elevated and are stable or falling. In addition, either (1) symptoms suggestive of myocardial ischemia or (2) new ischemic ECG changes or (3) angiographic findings consistent with a procedural complication or (4) imaging demonstration of new loss of viable myocardium or new regional wall motion abnormality are required.

4. Stent thrombosis associated with MI when detected by coronary angiography or autopsy in the setting of myocardial ischemia and with a rise and/or fall of cardiac biomarker values with at least one value above the 99th percentile URL.

5. Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) related MI is arbitrarily defined by elevation of cardiac biomarker values (> 10 × 99th percentile URL) in patients with normal baseline cTn values (≤99th percentile URL). In addition, either (1) new pathological Q waves or new LBBB, or (2) angiographic documented new graft or new native coronary artery occlusion, or (3) imaging evidence of new loss of viable myocardium or new regional wall motion abnormality.

### Vascular death

Vascular death include death due to stroke, cardiac sudden death, death caused by acute myocardial infarction, death caused by heart failure, death caused by pulmonary embolism, death caused by cardiac/cerebral interventions or operations (not caused by myocardial infarction) and death caused by other cardiovascular diseases. (Arrhythmia irrelevant to cardiac sudden death, rupture of aortic aneurysm or peripheral artery disease).

Unexplained death happened within 30 days after stroke, myocardial infarction, or cardiovascular/cerebral vascular operation is considered as stroke, myocardial infarction and accidental death caused by operation separately.

### Severe haemorrhage

Fatal, intracranial, or other haemorrhage causing substantial haemodynamic instability requiring intervention.

### Moderate haemorrhage

Bleeding that requires blood transfusion but does not lead to hemodynamic instability requiring intervention.
### Supplemental Table S3. Some studies of tirofiban applying on patients with ischaemic stroke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMID</th>
<th>Patients</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Timing of medication</th>
<th>Dosage of medication</th>
<th>Other interventions</th>
<th>Bleeding events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36697890</td>
<td>acute LVO stroke</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>within 24 h of time from last known well</td>
<td>10 μg/kg within first 3 min followed by 0.15 μg/kg/min for up to 24h</td>
<td>endovascular thrombectomy after tirofiban, mono or dual antiplatelet therapy overlapped 4h with tirofiban</td>
<td>8% SICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35943471</td>
<td>acute LVO stroke</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>within 24 h of time from last known well</td>
<td>10 μg/kg within first 3 min followed by 0.15 μg/kg/min for up to 24h</td>
<td>endovascular thrombectomy after tirofiban, mono or dual antiplatelet therapy overlapped 4h with tirofiban</td>
<td>9.7% SICH; 34.9% RICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36481613</td>
<td>acute BAO stroke</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>within 122-410 min from onset</td>
<td>0.4 μg/kg/min for 30 min followed by 0.1 μg/kg/min for up to 24h</td>
<td>endovascular treatment before or during tirofiban, mono or dual antiplatelet therapy after tirofiban</td>
<td>6.7% ICH; 4.8% SICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36421943</td>
<td>anterior circulation occlusion with a defective thrombectomy</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>within 12h from onset</td>
<td>a bolus of 10 μg/kg followed by 0.13 μg/kg/min for up to 24h</td>
<td>endovascular thrombectomy before tirofiban, dual antiplatelet therapy after tirofiban</td>
<td>not associated with an increased risk of ICH, sICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21852609</td>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>within 3-22h from onset</td>
<td>0.4 μg/kg/min for 30 min followed by 0.1 μg/kg/min for up to 48h</td>
<td>standard antiplatelet therapy at the same time</td>
<td>30% ICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34167477</td>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>within 24 h from onset</td>
<td>0.4 μg/kg/min for 30 min followed by 0.1 μg/kg/min</td>
<td>dual antiplatelet therapy after tirofiban</td>
<td>8% ICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study ID</td>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>Onset</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33274689</td>
<td>AIS, within 48 h from onset</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dual antiplatelet therapy followed by mono antiplatelet therapy for up to 48 h</td>
<td>No SICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20090319</td>
<td>AIS, within 3-6h from onset</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11% ICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29246609</td>
<td>AIS without arterial occlusion</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mono antiplatelet therapy for up to 72 h</td>
<td>No SICH; No ICH; No bleeding events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31570084</td>
<td>END within the first 24 h after IVT</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other antithrombotic therapy for up to 24 h</td>
<td>5.8% ICH; 1.7% SICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36461632</td>
<td>AIS with END, missing the IVT time window</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mono or dual antiplatelet therapy for up to 48 h</td>
<td>No SICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19738371</td>
<td>progressive ischemic stroke (NIHSS&gt;2)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antithrombotic therapy at the same time</td>
<td>No ICH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AIS, acute ischaemic stroke; BAO, basilar artery occlusion; END, early neurological deterioration; ICH, intracranial hemorrhage; IVT, intravenous thrombolysis; LVO, large vessel occlusion; RICH, radiologic intracranial hemorrhage; SICH, symptomatic intracranial hemorrhage.