

Retinal microvascular signs and recurrent vascular events in patients with TIA or minor stroke

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To cite: Klyscz P, Ihl T, Laumeier I, *et al.* Retinal microvascular signs and recurrent vascular events in patients with TIA or minor stroke. *Stroke & Vascular Neurology* 2023;**0**. doi:10.1136/svn-2022-001784

► Additional supplemental material is published online only. To view, please visit the journal online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/svn-2022-001784>).

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Received 15 June 2022
Accepted 5 February 2023

ABSTRACT

Background and purpose Retinal pathologies are an independent risk factor for ischaemic stroke, but research on the predictive value of retinal abnormalities for recurrent vascular events in patients with prior stroke is inconclusive. We investigated the association of retinal pathologies with subsequent vascular events.

Methods In a substudy of the Intensified secondary prevention intending a reduction of recurrent events in TIA and minor stroke patients (INSPIRE-TMS) trial, we enrolled patients with recent transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or minor stroke with at least one modifiable risk factor. Primary outcome was the composite of subsequent vascular events. Retinal photographs were taken at baseline and categorised into three different fundus groups by a telemedically linked ophthalmologist.

Results 722 patients participated in the current study and 109 major vascular events occurred. After multivariable adjustments, we did not find a significant association between fundus categories and risk for subsequent vascular events (HRs for moderate vascular retinopathy and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction in comparison to no vascular retinopathy 1.03 (95% CI 0.64 to 1.67), $p=0.905$ and 1.17 (95% CI 0.62 to 2.20), $p=0.626$). In a selective post hoc analysis in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension, patients with vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction had a higher risk for recurrent stroke (HR 24.14 (95% CI 2.74 to 212.50), $p=0.004$).

Conclusions Retinal changes did not predict major subsequent vascular events in patients with recent TIA or minor stroke. Further studies are needed to examine the utility of fundus photography in assessing the risk of stroke recurrence in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension.

INTRODUCTION

Microvascular changes of the retina have been linked to a higher risk of incidental ischaemic stroke as well as cardiovascular and all-cause mortality independent of long-established risk factors such as arterial hypertension and diabetes mellitus.^{1–3}

In particular, associations between retinal changes and cerebrovascular diseases were extensively investigated as the retina embryologically developed from the neural plate and therefore may act as a surrogate for the

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC

⇒ Microvascular pathologies are an independent risk factor for incidental ischaemic strokes, but data regarding subsequent vascular events are sparse.

WHAT THIS STUDY ADDS

⇒ In patients with recent transient ischaemic attacks (TIA) or minor stroke, the burden of retinal abnormalities was not associated with recurrent vascular events.

HOW THIS STUDY MIGHT AFFECT RESEARCH, PRACTICE OR POLICY

⇒ Although we did not show a general association between fundus changes and subsequent vascular events, retinal imaging might be useful in a subset of patients with diabetes and hypertension for identifying those at risk for recurrent ischaemic stroke.

cerebral microvasculature.⁴ Furthermore, alterations in retinal vessels might reflect pathologies in the systemic microcirculation of other organs especially in the heart⁵ and kidneys.⁶ These relationships have been shown predominantly in individuals free of any vascular event.

Patients with recent transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or minor stroke are at particular risk for developing subsequent strokes.⁷ In addition, these patients have an increased risk for other cardiovascular events such as myocardial infarction or vascular death.⁸ Even though prediction scores, such as the ABCD2 (acronym for age, blood pressure, clinical findings, duration of symptoms and presence or absence of diabetes) score, have shown good predictive value for short-time prognosis after TIA, there remain uncertainties regarding the long-term risk for recurrent adverse events. Fundus photography might offer an additional tool for stratifying those patients, as assessment of the retinal microvasculature might help in predicting future cardiovascular events.⁹

Prior studies mainly focused on predicting major vascular events through fundus



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photography in individuals without history of cerebrovascular events.

In this study, we examined the association between certain fundus pathologies and risk for subsequent vascular events after TIA or minor stroke. For a more practical approach, we classified the retinal images using a telemedical grading system in different fundus groups.

The current report is a substudy of the multicentre, secondary stroke prevention Intensified secondary prevention intending a reduction of recurrent events in TIA and minor stroke patients (INSPIRE-TMS) study.¹⁰

METHODS

Study population and design

The INSPIRE-TMS trial was a multicentre two-armed, secondary prevention study examining the effectiveness of a multifaceted support programme for reducing recurrent major vascular events, described in detail elsewhere.¹⁰ In this substudy, patients were included if they were recruited for the trial at the Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin—Campus Benjamin Franklin study centre.

In short, patients were recruited between 2011 and 2017 if they had a TIA or minor stroke within 14 days before study inclusion, were independent according to the modified Rankin Scale (mRS) of 2 or below and had an ABCD2 score of 3 or above or an acute ischaemic or haemorrhagic stroke in cerebral imaging. Additionally, eligible patients had to have one modifiable cardiovascular risk factor (ie, arterial hypertension, diabetes mellitus, atrial fibrillation or current tobacco smoking). Participants were randomised to either the standard care group or the intensified secondary prevention group, which provided standard care plus a support programme with eight outpatient visits over the first 2 years. During these appointments, risk factor targets were assessed by trained study nurses and stroke physicians. The support programme was based on motivational interviewing.¹¹ Study data were collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools.¹²

Patients with severe cognitive disability, malignant disease with life expectancy of <3 years, a current substance abuse (except for nicotine) and ischaemic stroke or TIA of an aetiology without evidence-based secondary prevention options (eg, dissection or vasculitis) were excluded from the study.

Assessment of stroke, risk factors and vascular outcomes

Eligible patients were evaluated by a stroke physician. Stroke subgroups were classified according to Trial of Org 10172 in Acute Stroke Treatment (TOAST). The National Institute of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS) and mRS were used to determine the extent of neurological deficits. Secondary prevention targets for modifiable risk factors were adopted from the guidelines for secondary prevention after stroke of the German Society of Neurology¹³ and European Stroke Organisation.¹⁴ Patients with a symptomatic carotid stenosis or unstable symptomatic plaque were treated according to the aggressive treatment targets from the Stenting and Aggressive Medical Management for Preventing Recurrent Stroke in Intracranial Stenosis (SAMMPRIS) trial.¹⁵

Primary outcome was the composite of major vascular events consisting of subsequent stroke (either ischaemic or haemorrhagic), acute coronary syndrome (including ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction, non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction and unstable angina pectoris) or vascular death. Data about vascular events were obtained during annual appointments and, if available, confirmed by medical reports. In case of death, death certificates were obtained from local authorities.

Retinal imaging

Fundus photographs of both eyes were taken after randomisation with a 45-degree non-mydratic colour fundus camera (KOWA NM-45, non-mydratic-alpha) centred at the optic nerve head. Because we refrained from using a mydratic agent to dilate patients' pupils, participants were placed in a darkened room for 5 min prior to the photograph in order to widen pupils through dark adaptation. The images were uploaded to the cloud-based software MedStage (Siemens, Medical Product, class IIa, Talkingeyes & More, Erlangen)^{16 17} and saved in the MedStage-patient chart. An experienced senior ophthalmologist (GM from Department of Ophthalmology Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg) classified—using a standardised protocol through the Tele-Ophthalmic Consultation Service Talkingeyes (Talkingeyes & More)—the pictures into three different fundus categories: no or mild vascular retinopathy, moderate vascular retinopathy and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction. The fundus groups were defined by the presence and severity of focal and general arteriolar narrowing, arteriovenous nicking and rarefaction of

Table 1 Fundus groups specifications

	No or mild vascular retinopathy	Moderate vascular retinopathy	Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction
Arteriolar narrowing	Absent or age-related	Mild to moderate narrowing	Severe narrowing
Arteriovenous nicking	Absent or age-related	Sporadically	Various nickings
Rarefaction of arterioles and venules	Absent	Absent	Significant rarefaction

arterioles and venules (table 1). Prior works of the examiner on the reliability of assessing different retinal pathologies revealed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.77.¹⁷ Because the left and right eye were examined distinctively, we excluded patients from the analysis if classification for each eye yielded different fundus groups.

Statistical analysis

SPSS (IBM, V.27) was used for all statistical procedures. Prevalences of risk factors, baseline characteristics and past vascular events were compared between fundus groups. We used Cox regression models to analyse the predictive value of fundus pathologies on risk of vascular events for the primary composite outcome and separated for stroke, acute coronary syndrome and vascular death. We selected the no or mild vascular retinopathy group as the reference category. The model was adjusted for sex, age (years), body mass index (BMI), ABCD2, index event type, study arm, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, atrial fibrillation, current smoking, stroke aetiology according to TOAST and carotid surgery to minimise a bias through possible confounders. HRs and 95% CIs are reported.

Following the main analysis, we carried out a selective subgroup analysis in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension. Those cardiovascular diseases are well-established risk factors for incidental vascular events and act synergistically for recurrent ischaemic stroke as expressed in the ABCD2 score⁷ and in the CHA2DS2-VASc score.¹⁸ Also, diabetes mellitus and hypertension

are frequent causes for retinal pathologies.¹⁹ An interaction analysis revealed a significant interaction between diabetes mellitus and hypertension and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction on the risk for recurrent ischaemic stroke ($p=0.006$) but not for composite vascular events ($p=0.342$). No statistically significant interaction was shown when testing for the other outcome events. HRs were only computed for composite vascular events, recurrent stroke and vascular deaths because no acute coronary syndromes occurred in the fundus category vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction. P values <0.05 were defined as statistically significant.

RESULTS

Study population

In total, we enrolled 954 patients at the Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Campus Benjamin Franklin study site, of which 841 participants received a fundus photograph. We excluded 119 patients due to ungradable pictures, missing data and study protocol violations at study inclusion (ie, stroke not being most probable diagnosis and missing option for evidence-based secondary prevention). Hence, we included 722 patients in the final analysis (figure 1). Among the 722 subjects included in the final analysis, mean age was 69 years (SD 10 years), 34.8% were female, median ABCD2 was 4 (IQR 4–5) and median NIHSS was 1 (IQR 0–2). Incidental stroke aetiologies according to TOAST were distributed as followed:

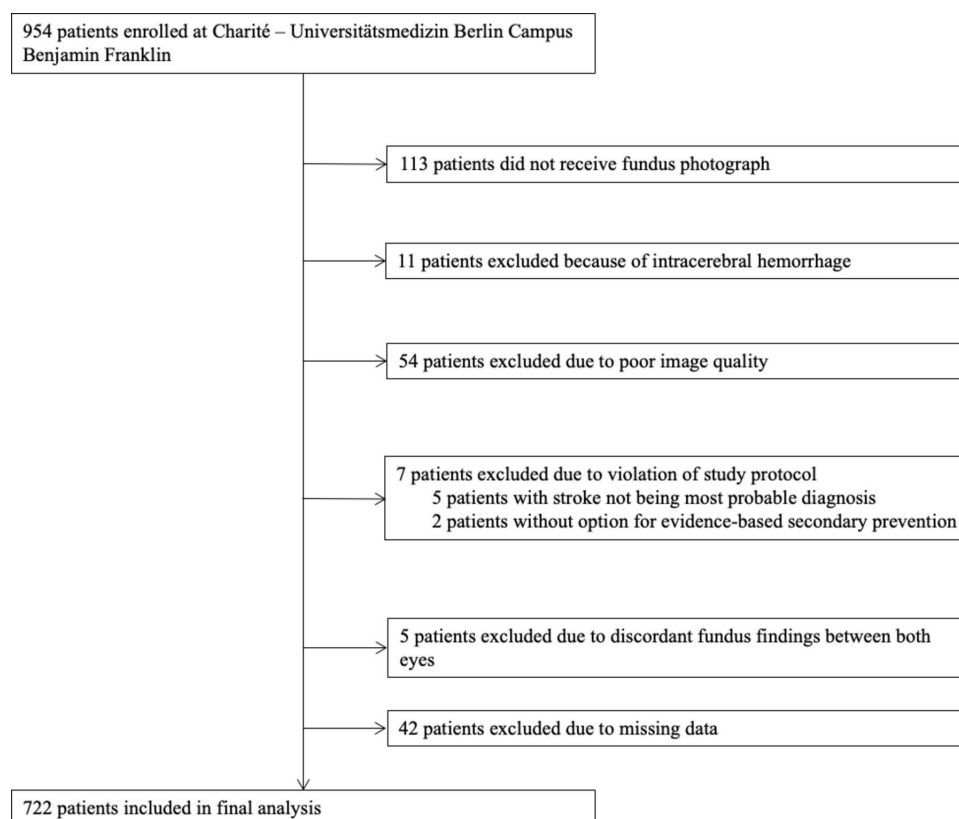


Figure 1 Flow chart.

Table 2 Baseline characteristics for study cohort by composite outcome and vascular events

	Total (n=722)	Composite events		Recurrent stroke	Acute coronary syndrome	Vascular death
		Yes (n=109)	No (n=613)	Yes (n=74)	Yes (n=20)	Yes (n=15)
Age (years), mean (\pm SD)	69 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 10)	68 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 7)	70 (\pm 10)
Sex, n (%)						
Female	251 (34.8)	36 (33.0)	215 (35.1)	25 (33.8)	5 (25.0)	6 (40.0)
Male	471 (65.2)	73 (67.0)	398 (64.9)	49 (66.2)	15 (75.0)	9 (60.0)
Study arm, n (%)						
Conventional care	352 (48.8)	57 (52.3)	295 (48.1)	38 (51.4)	12 (60.0)	7 (46.7)
Intensified care	370 (51.2)	52 (47.7)	318 (51.9)	36 (48.6)	8 (40.0)	8 (53.3)
BMI (kg/m ²), mean (\pm SD)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 5)	29 (\pm 4)
ABCD2, median (IQR)	4 (4–5)	5 (4–6)	4 (4–5)	5 (4–6)	5 (4–5)	4 (4–5)
NIHSS, median (IQR)*	1 (0–2)	1 (0–2)	1 (0–2)	1 (0–2)	1 (0–2)	2 (0–2)
Carotid surgery, n (%)	22 (3.0)	7 (6.4)	15 (2.4)	3 (4.1)	3 (15.0)	1 (6.7)
Vascular risk factors, n (%)						
Hypertension	640 (88.6)	99 (90.8)	541 (88.3)	67 (90.5)	19 (95.0)	13 (86.7)
Diabetes mellitus	174 (24.1)	37 (33.9)	137 (22.3)	24 (32.4)	7 (35.0)	6 (40.0)
Atrial fibrillation	127 (17.6)	16 (14.7)	111 (18.1)	13 (17.6)	2 (10.0)	1 (6.7)
Smoking	127 (17.6)	23 (21.1)	104 (17.0)	12 (16.2)	6 (30.0)	5 (33.3)
Index event, n (%)						
TIA	326 (45.2)	39 (35.8)	287 (46.8)	30 (40.5)	5 (25.0)	4 (26.7)
Minor stroke	396 (54.8)	70 (64.2)	326 (53.2)	44 (59.5)	15 (75.0)	11 (73.3)
Stroke aetiology, n (%)						
Large vessel atherosclerosis	67 (9.3)	13 (11.9)	54 (8.8)	8 (10.8)	4 (20.0)	1 (6.7)
Cardioembolism	133 (18.4)	17 (15.6)	116 (18.9)	11 (14.9)	4 (20.0)	2 (13.3)
Small vessel disease	59 (8.2)	11 (10.1)	48 (7.8)	4 (5.4)	6 (30.0)	1 (6.7)
Other aetiology	11 (1.5)	3 (2.8)	8 (1.3)	3 (4.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Undetermined cause	452 (62.6)	65 (59.6)	385 (63.1)	48 (64.9)	6 (30.0)	11 (73.3)
Previous vascular event, n (%)						
TIA†	40 (5.7)	11 (10.8)	29 (4.9)	9 (12.9)	0 (0)	2 (14.3)
Stroke‡	117 (16.5)	26 (24.8)	91 (15.0)	16 (22.2)	9 (47.4)	1 (7.1)
Myocardial infarction§	57 (8.0)	15 (14.0)	42 (6.9)	7 (9.6)	5 (26.3)	3 (20.0)
Fundus groups, n (%)						
No or mild vascular retinopathy	155 (21.5)	27 (24.8)	128 (20.9)	16 (21.6)	7 (35.0)	4 (26.7)
Moderate vascular retinopathy	473 (65.5)	60 (55.0)	413 (67.4)	43 (58.1)	7 (35.0)	10 (66.7)
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	94 (13.0)	22 (20.2)	72 (11.7)	15 (20.3)	6 (30.0)	1 (6.7)

*Data available for 720 patients.

†Data available for 696 patients.

‡Data available for 710 patients.

§Data available for 714 patients.

ABCD2, age, blood pressure, clinical findings, duration of symptoms and presence or absence of diabetes; BMI, body mass index; NIHSS, National Institute of Health Stroke Scale; TIA, transient ischaemic attack.

9.3% large vessel atherosclerosis, 18.4% cardioembolic, 8.2% small vessel disease, 1.5% other causes and 62.6% undetermined aetiology (6.5% competing causes, 24.3% no potential cause, 31.1% incomplete diagnostics, 38.1% unknown reasons).

The baseline characteristics and distribution of cardiovascular risk factors separated for the different outcome events are shown in [table 2](#). In total, 109 vascular events occurred during the course of the trial. Most of these events were subsequent strokes (n=74, 65.4%), followed

by acute coronary syndromes (n=20, 18.3%) and vascular deaths (n=15, 13.1%). The majority of the examined retinas were classified as moderate vascular retinopathy (65.5%), followed by no or mild vascular retinopathy (21.5%) and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction (13.0%).

Vascular risk factors between fundus groups were distributed as follows (online supplemental table 1). Patients classified as vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction had the highest rates of hypertension. Furthermore, these patients were older and their index event was classified more often as small vessel disease compared with the rest of the cohort. On the other hand, patients with no or mild vascular retinopathy were more often affected by diabetes mellitus and were more frequently tobacco smokers.

Subsequent vascular events in all patients

Bivariate Cox regression analysis did not yield a significant predictive value between fundus groups and any subsequent vascular event (HR for moderate vascular retinopathy and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction in comparison with no fundus changes 1.19 (95% CI 0.75 to 1.88), p=0.469 and 1.40 (95% CI 0.79 to 2.47), p=0.248, respectively). HRs for different outcomes are shown in the online supplemental table 2.

After adjusting the model for age, sex, BMI, ABCD2, index event type, study arm, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, atrial fibrillation, current smoking, stroke aetiology and carotid surgery, there was no independent association between fundus categories and the composite of vascular events or any subcategory of recurrent vascular events (table 3). HR for subsequent composite vascular events in patients with moderate vascular retinopathy was 1.03 ((95% CI 0.64 to 1.67), p=0.905) compared with patients that lacked retinal lesions (ie, no or mild vascular retinopathy). In patients with vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction, HR was 1.17 ((95% CI 0.62 to 2.20), p=0.626) compared with patients classified as no or mild vascular retinopathy.

Subsequent vascular events in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension

In a post hoc analysis, we investigated the association between fundus pathologies and recurrent vascular events in patients diagnosed with diabetes mellitus and hypertension (table 4 and online supplemental table 3).

In total, 154 patients had a diagnosis of both arterial hypertension and diabetes mellitus. Most of these patients were classified as moderate vascular retinopathy (66.9%), followed by no or mild vascular retinopathy (22.1%), and vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction (11.0%), respectively. Subsequent vascular events in this subgroup were distributed as follows: 20 (62.5%) recurrent strokes, 7 (21.9%) acute coronary syndromes and 5 (15.6%) vascular deaths.

In line with our main findings, in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension the Cox proportional hazards

Table 3 Cox proportional hazards with multivariable adjustments* in all patients

	Composite events (n=109)		Recurrent stroke (n=74)		Acute coronary syndrome (n=20)		Vascular death (n=15)	
	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value
No or mild vascular retinopathy	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Moderate vascular retinopathy	1.03 (0.64 to 1.67)	0.905	1.40 (0.76 to 2.57)	0.284	0.32 (0.10 to 1.03)	0.056	1.05 (0.31 to 3.54)	0.941
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	1.17 (0.62 to 2.20)	0.626	1.47 (0.66 to 3.24)	0.346	0.84 (0.22 to 3.24)	0.802	0.51 (0.05 to 4.94)	0.558

*Model adjusted for age, sex, BMI, ABCD2, index event type, randomisation arm, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, atrial fibrillation, current smoking, stroke aetiology and carotid surgery. ABCD2, age, blood pressure, clinical findings, duration of symptoms and presence or absence of diabetes; BMI, body mass index.

Table 4 Post hoc analysis: Cox proportional hazards with multivariable adjustments in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension

	Composite events (n=32)*		Recurrent stroke (n=20)*		Acute coronary syndrome (n=7)		Vascular death (n=5)†	
	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value	HR (95% CI)	P value
No or mild vascular retinopathy	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Moderate vascular retinopathy	0.82 (0.32 to 2.13)	0.685	2.56 (0.51 to 12.91)	0.254	0	0	2.13 (0.17 to 26.14)	0.554
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	2.11 (0.47 to 9.54)	0.333	24.14 (2.74 to 212.50)	0.004	0	0	8.15 (0.25 to 262.14)	0.236

*Model adjusted for age, sex, BMI, ABCD2, index event type, randomisation arm, atrial fibrillation, current smoking, stroke aetiology and carotid surgery.

†Model adjusted for age, sex, BMI, ABCD2, index event type, randomisation arm, current smoking and carotid surgery. ABCD2, age, blood pressure, clinical findings, duration of symptoms and presence or absence of diabetes; BMI, body mass index.

after multivariable adjustments (ie, age, sex, BMI, ABCD2, index event type, study arm, atrial fibrillation, current smoking, stroke aetiology and carotid surgery) did not show a statistically significant association between fundus changes and the composite of vascular events (HR for vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction compared with no or mild vascular retinopathy 2.11 (95% CI 0.47 to 9.54), $p=0.333$). When examining the possible relationship between fundus groups and different outcome events, we found a statistically significant association between vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction and an elevated risk for recurrent stroke compared with patients with no or mild vascular retinopathy (HR 24.14 (95% CI 2.74 to 212.50), $p=0.004$) but not for vascular death (HR 8.15 (95% CI 0.25 to 262.14), $p=0.236$).

DISCUSSION

In this substudy of the INSPiRE-TMS trial of patients with TIA or minor stroke, no independent association was found between retinal pathologies categorised into different severity levels and the risk for subsequent vascular events. Retinal pathologies were also not correlated with single major vascular events, that is, recurrent stroke, acute coronary syndrome and vascular death.

Different retinal parameters and their association with the risk of major vascular events have already been studied in several aspects. In our study, we focused on fundus parameters which are relatively easy to assess by a telemedical approach: arteriolar narrowing, arteriovenous nicking and vessel rarefaction. Arteriolar narrowing describes a tapering of arterioles width compared with venules. Arteriovenous nicking is characterised by a reduction of vessel diameters before and after arteriovenous junctions. Vessel rarefaction represents an overall reduction of vessel density in the retina. These pathologies of the retinal microvasculature can be observed in patients with hypertension and diabetes mellitus.

Our goal was to establish an easy and quick-to-learn classification system of the retina in order to standardise fundus photographs. Therefore, we only used a limited set of parameters to keep the grading as simple as possible. We hypothesised that patients with no or mild vascular retinopathy, who only had marginally changes of the retina, would have a low risk for recurrent vascular events. Contrarily, we speculated that patients with a decent load of retinal pathologies as in the moderate vascular retinopathy group or a high burden of retinal changes as in the vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction group would be more likely to be affected by subsequent vascular events.

Data regarding the usefulness of retinal imaging in predicting recurrent vascular events are sparse because most of the studies on predictive value of retinal pathologies were conducted in patients who had not experienced a cerebrovascular event. The most relevant study examining a possible association between fundus changes and recurrent events was published by De Silva *et al.* In a

prospective cohort study with 652 patients with ischaemic stroke, arteriovenous nicking and severe focal arteriolar narrowing were associated with an elevated risk for recurrent cerebrovascular event.⁹ These findings were confirmed by Zhuo *et al.*²⁰ Furthermore, Yuanyuan *et al* identified retinal haemorrhages and exudates as additional predictors for subsequent strokes.²¹ On the other hand, a Swedish retrospective cohort study found no association between the presence of diabetic retinopathy and stroke recurrence in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus.²²

In contrast to previous studies, we did not find an independent predictive value of arteriolar narrowing, arteriovenous nicking or vessel rarefaction stratified in different severity categories for the risk of recurrent events. Because all our patients had a TIA or minor stroke as an index event and presence of a cardiovascular risk factor (ie, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, atrial fibrillation or smoking) was obligatory for study inclusion, our patient cohort had a higher vascular risk than patients in prior reports. Therefore, we also observed higher prevalence of fundus changes. Hence, a possible explanation for our findings might be that the predictive value of retinal parameters depends on the burden of cardiovascular comorbidities as proposed by De Silva *et al.*⁹

Even though we did not assess parameters of diabetic retinopathy, a post hoc analysis in patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension revealed a significant association between retinal changes and risk for subsequent ischaemic stroke. Non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy is defined by the presence of microaneurysms, cotton wool spots (nerve fibre layer infarcts), haemorrhages, hard exudates and intraretinal microvascular abnormalities (ie, shunt-vessels or neovascularisations within the retina). Neovascularisations mark the transition to proliferative diabetic retinopathy and therefore a progressive disease status. Previous research showed that both mild²³ and severe²⁴ diabetic retinopathy predict incident ischaemic stroke, but recent results regarding patients with diabetic retinopathy and stroke recurrence were inconclusive.^{22, 25} Furthermore, patients with hypertension have an elevated risk for incidental vascular events if retinopathy signs were present.²⁶ The results of the post hoc analysis might implicate that retinal changes (ie, arteriolar narrowing, arteriovenous nicking, vessel rarefaction), which are not directly linked to diabetic retinopathy, are an independent predictor for subsequent stroke in patients with diabetes with hypertension. The synergistic effect of hypertension and diabetes mellitus on the risk for recurrent ischaemic stroke⁷ (as expressed in the ABCD2 and CHA2D2S-VASc scores) and on the progression on retinopathy²⁷ has been widely accepted. It therefore seems plausible that these patients have an additional risk for subsequent vascular events when severe fundus changes are present.

The strengths of the present study are its prospective design as part of a randomised trial, standardised evaluation of stroke through trained stroke physicians and

the standardised and independent evaluation of fundus images by an experienced senior ophthalmologist using a telemedical approach. This study is the largest investigation, in terms of number of patients, to examine the association between retinal changes and recurrent vascular events.

Our study has some limitations that need to be discussed. For the definitions of the fundus groups, we only used qualitative parameters. Qualitative parameters might have a lower inter-rater reliability than quantitative parameters. We tried to minimise a potential bias by focusing on just three essential parameters and applying a standardised protocol. In order to increase concordance, only one experienced ophthalmologist graded the images. Also, as the results from the subgroup analysis were derived from a post hoc analysis, these associations need to be treated with caution. We therefore cannot rule out that the reported associations are due to chance. Larger prospective cohort studies are needed to confirm these results. At last, because an uneven distribution of risk factor control between fundus groups might bias the results, we assessed the achievement of secondary prevention targets (online supplemental tables 4-6). Overall, there were no major differences in secondary prevention targets through all examined follow-ups apart from achievements of blood pressure targets and proportion of smokers.

In this prospective study in patients with recent TIA or minor stroke, we did not find an independent correlation between retinal pathologies stratified into different severity categories and risk for vascular events. A post hoc analysis in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus and hypertension hints towards an increased risk for recurrent ischaemic stroke in these patients with severe fundus changes. Further studies are needed to examine the predictive value of non-diabetic retinopathy signs for future vascular events.

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Contributors GM and HJA contributed equally to the manuscript as last author.

PK was responsible for analysing and interpreting the data, as well as writing and drafting the manuscript. TI participated in trial management, analysing the data, revising the manuscript and gave important intellectual input. IL participated in trial design and management. MS participated in trial management. ME participated in funding acquisition, trial conduct and gave critical input to the manuscript. GM and HJA were the principal investigators of the study and participated in drafting and editing the manuscript. GM conceptualised and designed the study, was responsible for analysing the data and interpreted the results. HJA was responsible for study design, funding acquisition, trial conduct, quality management and analysing and interpreting the result. HJA was the guarantor of the study.

Funding The INSPIRE-TMS trial was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Pfizer and German Stroke Foundation.

Competing interests PK, TI, IL, MS declare no disclosures or competing interest. ME reports grants from Bayer and fees paid to the Charité from AstraZeneca, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, BMS, Daiichi Sankyo, Amgen, GSK, Sanofi, Covidien, Novartis, Pfizer, all outside the submitted work. GM reports grants from Bayer, outside the submitted work. HJA has received funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF) and the German Innovation Fund for other projects. He reports personal fees from AstraZeneca, Bayer Vital, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol Myers Squibb, Novo Nordisk, Pfizer and Sanofi.

Patient consent for publication Consent obtained directly from patient(s).

Ethics approval This study was approved by Charité Berlin ethics committee (EA2/084/11). 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 are available on reasonable request. The data supporting the findings in the present study are available from the principal investigator (heinrich.audebert@charite.de) on reasonable request.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Stroke and Vascular Neurology

Retinal microvascular signs and recurrent vascular events in patients with TIA or minor stroke

Supplemental table 1. Baseline characteristics by fundus groups

	No or mild vascular retinopathy		Moderate vascular retinopathy		Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	
	Yes (n=155)	No (n=567)	Yes (n=473)	No (n=249)	Yes (n=94)	No (n=628)
Age (years), mean (\pm SD)	64 (\pm 11)	70 (\pm 9)	70 (\pm 10)	67 (\pm 11)	72 (\pm 7)	68 (\pm 10)
Sex, n (%)						
Female	59 (38.1)	192 (33.9)	160 (33.8)	91 (36.5)	32 (34.0)	219 (34.9)
Male	96 (61.9)	375 (66.1)	313 (66.2)	158 (63.5)	62 (66.0)	409 (65.1)
Study arm, n (%)						
Conventional care	67 (56.8)	285 (50.3)	235 (49.7)	114 (45.8)	47 (50.0)	305 (51.4)
Intensified care	88 (43.2)	282 (49.7)	238 (50.3)	135 (54.2)	47 (50.0)	323 (48.6)
BMI (kg/m ²), mean (\pm SD)	29 (\pm 5)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 5)	27 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)
ABCD2, median (IQR)	4 (3-5)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	5 (4-6)	4 (4-5)
NIHSS, median (IQR) [†]	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)
Carotid surgery, n (%)	5 (3.2)	17 (3.0)	13 (2.7)	9 (3.6)	4 (4.3)	18 (2.9)
Vascular risk factors, n (%)						
Hypertension	127 (81.9)	513 (90.5)	423 (89.4)	217 (87.1)	90 (95.7)	550 (87.6)
Diabetes mellitus	41 (26.5)	133 (23.5)	116 (24.5)	58 (23.3)	17 (18.1)	157 (25.0)
Atrial fibrillation	27 (17.4)	100 (17.6)	88 (18.6)	39 (15.7)	12 (12.8)	115 (18.3)
Smoking	43 (27.7)	84 (14.8)	72 (15.2)	55 (22.1)	12 (12.8)	115 (18.3)
Index event, n (%)						
TIA	71 (45.8)	255 (45.0)	223 (47.1)	103 (41.4)	32 (34.0)	294 (46.8)
Minor stroke	84 (54.2)	312 (55.0)	250 (52.9)	146 (58.6)	62 (66.0)	334 (53.2)
Stroke etiology, n (%)						
Large vessel atherosclerosis	16 (10.3)	51 (9.0)	40 (8.5)	27 (10.8)	11 (11.7)	56 (8.9)
Cardioembolism	30 (19.4)	103 (18.2)	88 (18.6)	45 (18.1)	15 (16.0)	118 (18.8)
Small vessel disease	8 (5.2)	51 (9.0)	39 (8.2)	20 (8.0)	12 (12.8)	47 (7.5)
Other etiology	0 (0)	11 (1.9)	11 (2.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (1.8)
Undetermined cause	101 (65.2)	351 (61.9)	295 (62.4)	157 (63.1)	56 (59.6)	396 (63.1)
Previous vascular event, n (%)						
TIA [‡]	9 (5.8)	31 (5.7)	24 (5.3)	16 (6.6)	7 (7.6)	33 (5.5)
Stroke [§]	25 (16.2)	92 (16.5)	70 (15.1)	47 (19.0)	22 (23.7)	95 (15.4)
Myocardial infarction	12 (7.7)	45 (8.1)	37 (7.9)	20 (8.1)	8 (8.6)	49 (7.9)

[†]Data available for 720 patients

[‡]Data available for 696 patients

[§]Data available for 710 patients

^{||}Data available for 714 patients

SD, standard deviation; BMI, body mass index; IQR, interquartile range; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 2. Cox proportional hazards for bivariate hazard ratios

	Composite events (N=109)		Recurrent stroke (N=74)		Acute coronary syndrome (N=20)		Vascular death (N=15)	
	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value
Age	1.04 (1.01-1.06)	0.001	1.04 (1.01-1.07)	0.004	1.03 (0.98-1.09)	0.230	1.03 (0.97-1.09)	0.398
Sex	0.93 (0.62-1.38)	0.703	0.95 (0.58-1.53)	0.819	0.65 (0.23-1.78)	0.396	1.28 (0.46-3.59)	0.640
Study arm (conventional care)	1.08 (0.74-1.57)	0.699	1.02 (0.64-1.61)	0.941	1.53 (0.63-3.75)	0.351	0.90 (0.33-2.48)	0.835
BMI (kg/m ²)	1.00 (0.96-1.04)	0.988	0.99 (0.94-1.04)	0.747	1.00 (0.90-1.10)	0.930	1.05 (0.94-1.16)	0.417
ABCD2	1.16 (0.99-1.36)	0.062	1.27 (1.05-1.54)	0.014	1.04 (0.72-1.52)	0.821	0.86 (0.55-1.33)	0.484
NIHSS†	1.04 (0.97-1.12)	0.284	1.06 (0.97-1.15)	0.202	1.01 (0.84-1.21)	0.928	1.00 (0.81-1.23)	1.000
Carotid surgery	2.06 (0.95-4.48)	0.068	1.18 (0.37-3.82)	0.780	6.06 (1.77-20.74)	0.004	2.36 (0.31-17.98)	0.406
Vascular risk factors								
Hypertension	1.04 (0.54-1.99)	0.914	0.96 (0.44-2.10)	0.920	2.06 (0.28-15.37)	0.483	0.79 (0.18-3.50)	0.757
Diabetes mellitus	1.58 (1.06-2.35)	0.024	1.47 (0.90-2.40)	0.121	1.65 (0.66-4.13)	0.287	2.09 (0.74-5.86)	0.163
Atrial fibrillation	1.07 (0.63-1.83)	0.793	1.41 (0.77-2.59)	0.263	0.67 (0.16-2.90)	0.594	0.36 (0.05-2.76)	0.327
Smoking	1.15 (0.73-1.83)	0.548	0.81 (0.44-1.51)	0.510	1.87 (0.71-4.89)	0.204	2.41 (0.82-7.04)	0.109
Index event (minor stroke)	1.53 (1.04-2.27)	0.033	1.28 (0.80-2.04)	0.298	2.44 (0.89-6.71)	0.084	2.23 (0.71-7.00)	0.170
Stroke etiology								
Large vessel atherosclerosis	1.45 (0.80-2.63)	0.225	1.21 (0.57-2.57)	0.615	4.71 (1.33-16.68)	0.016	0.66 (0.09-5.10)	0.689
Cardioembolism	1.14 (0.67-1.95)	0.634	1.05 (0.54-2.03)	0.888	2.77 (0.78-9.85)	0.114	0.66 (0.15-2.99)	0.592
Small vessel disease	1.05 (0.55-2.00)	0.880	0.52 (0.19-1.45)	0.210	5.59 (1.80-17.37)	0.003	0.63 (0.08-4.88)	0.658
Other etiology	3.73 (1.16-11.95)	0.027	5.69 (1.74-18.57)	0.004	0	0	0	0
Undetermined cause	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Previous vascular event								
TIA‡	1.90 (1.01-3.55)	0.046	2.39 (1.18-4.83)	0.015	0	0	2.54 (0.57-11.34)	0.223
Stroke§	1.61 (1.03-2.51)	0.037	1.38 (0.79-2.41)	0.259	4.37 (1.77-10.75)	0.001	0.40 (0.05-3.04)	0.374
Myocardial infarction	1.98 (1.14-3.42)	0.015	1.31 (0.60-2.86)	0.498	4.12 (1.48-11.45)	0.007	2.89 (0.82-10.25)	0.100
Fundus group								
No or mild vascular retinopathy	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Moderate vascular retinopathy	1.19 (0.75-1.88)	0.469	1.55 (0.86-2.78)	0.143	0.51 (0.18-1.47)	0.214	1.00 (0.31-3.21)	0.998
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	1.40 (0.79-2.47)	0.248	1.54 (0.76-3.15)	0.234	1.64 (0.55-4.89)	0.374	0.45 (0.05-4.02)	0.474

†Data available for 720 patients

‡Data available for 696 patients

§Data available for 710 patients

||Data available for 714 patients

HR, hazard ratio; CI, confidence intervals; BMI, body mass index; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 3. Post-hoc analysis: Baseline characteristics of patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension

	Total (n=154)	Composite events		Recurrent stroke	Acute coronary syndrome	Vascular death
		Yes (n=32)	No (n=122)	Yes (n=20)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=5)
Age (years), mean (\pm SD)	69 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 11)	69 (\pm 9)	71 (\pm 12)	68 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 9)
Sex, n (%)						
Female	47 (30.5)	10 (31.3)	37 (30.3)	5 (25.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Male	107 (69.5)	22 (68.8)	85 (69.7)	15 (75.0)	5 (71.4)	2 (40.0)
Study arm, n (%)						
Conventional care	77 (50.0)	20 (37.5)	57 (46.7)	13 (65.0)	4 (57.1)	3 (60.0)
Intensified care	77 (50.0)	12 (62.5)	65 (53.3)	7 (35.0)	3 (42.9)	2 (40.0)
BMI (kg/m ²), mean (SD)	30 (\pm 5)	30 (\pm 4)	30 (\pm 5)	29 (\pm 4)	33 (\pm 4)	30 (\pm 5)
ABCD2, median (IQR)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	4 (3.5-6)
NIHSS, median (IQR)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-1)	1 (1-3)	2 (0-2.5)
Carotid surgery, n (%)	7 (4.5)	1 (3.1)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	1 (14.3)	0 (0)
Vascular risk factors, n (%)						
Atrial fibrillation	21 (12.6)	1 (3.1)	20 (16.4)	1 (5.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Smoking	25 (16.2)	11 (34.4)	14 (11.5)	5 (25.0)	4 (57.1)	2 (40.0)
Index event, n (%)						
TIA	71 (46.1)	15 (46.9)	56 (45.9)	13 (65.0)	1 (14.3)	1 (20.0)
Minor stroke	83 (54.9)	17 (53.1)	66 (54.1)	7 (35.0)	6 (85.7)	4 (80.0)
Stroke etiology, n (%)						
Large vessel atherosclerosis	25 (16.2)	5 (15.6)	20 (16.4)	3 (15.0)	1 (14.3)	1 (20.0)
Cardioembolism	25 (16.2)	4 (12.5)	21 (17.2)	3 (15.0)	1 (14.3)	0 (0)
Small vessel disease	15 (9.7)	5 (15.6)	10 (8.2)	1 (5.0)	3 (42.9)	1 (20.0)
Other etiology	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	1 (0.8)	0 (0)	0	0 (0)
Undetermined cause	88 (57.1)	18 (56.3)	70 (57.4)	13 (65.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Previous vascular event, n (%)						
TIA [†]	6 (4.0)	1 (3.3)	5 (4.1)	1 (5.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Stroke [‡]	26 (17.1)	7 (22.6)	19 (15.7)	3 (15.8)	4 (57.1)	0 (0)
Myocardial infarction	19 (12.6)	6 (18.8)	13 (10.7)	2 (10.0)	2 (28.6)	2 (40.0)
Fundus groups, n (%)						
No or mild vascular retinopathy	34 (22.1)	8 (25.0)	26 (21.3)	2 (10.0)	5 (71.4)	1 (20.0)
Moderate vascular retinopathy	103 (66.9)	18 (56.3)	85 (69.7)	13 (65.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	17 (11.0)	6 (18.8)	11 (9.0)	5 (25.0)	0 (0)	1 (20.0)

[†]Data available for 151 patients

[‡]Data available for 152 patients

^{||}Data available for 151 patients

SD, standard deviation; BMI, body mass index; IQR, interquartile range; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 4. Secondary prevention targets at 1 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (n=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (n=155)	No (n=567)	p-value	Yes (n=473)	No (n=249)	p-value	Yes (n=94)	No (n=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	130.4 (±14.9)	126.8 (±15.5)	131.4 (±14.6)	0.002	131.1 (±14.5)	129.0 (±15.5)	0.088	132.5 (±15.0)	130.1 (±14.9)	0.158
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.7 (±9.6)	77.7 (±10.0)	78.9 (±9.4)	0.197	78.7 (±9.5)	78.5 (±9.8)	0.737	79.7 (±9.4)	78.5 (±9.6)	0.276
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.7% (368/616)	67.7% (90/133)	57.6% (278/483)	0.035	59.1% (237/401)	60.9% (131/215)	0.659	50.0% (41/82)	61.2% (327/534)	0.053
LDL (mg/dl), mean (SD)	93.7 (±34.0)	91.5 (±33.2)	94.3 (±34.3)	0.401	94.1 (±33.6)	93.1 (±35.0)	0.752	95.7 (±37.6)	93.4 (±33.5)	0.570
LDL target achieved‡	54.5% (324/594)	58.9% (76/129)	53.3% (248/465)	0.260	53.4% (206/384)	56.2% (118/210)	0.552	51.9% (42/81)	55.0% (282/513)	0.621
Smoking abstinence	88.3% (564/639)	79.4% (108/136)	90.7% (456/503)	0.001	90.6% (378/417)	83.8% (186/222)	0.010	90.7% (78/86)	87.9% (486/553)	0.451
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.9)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.418	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.810	5.9 (±0.7)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.520
HbA1c target achieved§	95.7% (553/578)	92.7% (115/124)	96.5% (438/454)	0.070	96.3% (364/378)	94.5% (189/200)	0.313	97.4% (74/76)	95.4% (479/502)	0.436
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	93.9% (460/490)	95.2% (99/104)	93.5% (361/386)	0.529	92.8% (297/320)	95.9% (163/170)	0.177	97.0% (64/66)	93.4% (396/424)	0.260
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	91.2% (135/148)	93.8 (30/32)	90.5% (105/116)	0.567	89.7% (87/97)	94.1% (48/51)	0.366	94.7% (18/19)	90.7% (117/129)	0.561
Physical activity target achieved	21.3% (136/639)	27.5% (38/138)	19.6% (98/501)	0.043	20.0% (83/415)	23.7% (53/224)	0.281	17.4% (15/86)	21.9% (121/553)	0.349

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.

Supplemental table 5. Secondary prevention targets at 2 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (N=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (N=155)	No (N=567)	p-value	Yes (N=473)	No (N=249)	p-value	Yes (N=94)	No (N=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	130.0 (±16.0)	126.8 (±15.8)	131.1 (±15.9)	0.015	130.1 (±15.8)	130.0 (±16.3)	0.937	135.1 (±15.7)	129.2 (±15.9)	0.005
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.4 (±8.4)	77.3 (±8.3)	78.7 (±8.4)	0.115	78.4 (±8.3)	78.4 (±8.3)	0.947	80.2 (±8.4)	78.1 (±8.3)	0.046
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.4% (277/466)	65.2% (73/112)	57.6% (204/354)	0.156	60.4% (172/285)	58.0% (105/181)	0.616	46.4% (32/69)	61.7% (245/397)	0.017
LDL (md/dl), mean (SD)	94.6 (±34.7)	90.4 (±32.0)	96.0 (±35.5)	0.140	95.6 (±34.9)	93.2 (±34.5)	0.475	97.9 (±38.2)	94.1 (±34.1)	0.412
LDL target achieved‡	54.1% (242/447)	56.8% (63/111)	53.3% (179/336)	0.523	53.7% (146/272)	54.9% (96/175)	0.807	51.6% (33/64)	54.6% (209/383)	0.655
Smoking abstinence	87.5% (443/506)	81.8% (99/121)	89.4% (344/385)	0.029	89.6% (284/317)	84.1% (159/189)	0.072	88.2% (60/68)	87.4% (383/438)	0.854
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.245	5.9 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.891	5.8 (±0.7)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.109
HbA1c target achieved§	96.3% (418/434)	97.1% (102/105)	96.1% (317/330)	0.608	96.3% (257/267)	96.4% (162/168)	0.925	95.2% (60/63)	96.5% (359/372)	0.621
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	95.5% (359/376)	95.5% (84/88)	95.5% (275/288)	0.990	94.5% (222/235)	97.2% (137/141)	0.223	100% (53/53)	94.7% (306/323)	0.087
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	96.6% (113/117)	96.8% (30/31)	96.5% (83/86)	0.945	95.8% (68/71)	97.8% (45/46)	0.551	100% (15/15)	96.1% (98/102)	0.435
Physical activity target achieved	21.1% (108/511)	22.1% (27/122)	20.8% (81/389)	0.757	21.7% (69/318)	20.2% (39/193)	0.689	16.9% (12/71)	21.8% (96/440)	0.346

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.

Supplemental table 6. Secondary prevention targets at 3 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (N=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (N=155)	No (N=567)	p-value	Yes (N=473)	No (N=249)	p-value	Yes (N=94)	No (N=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	131.0 (±16.0)	129.1 (±13.8)	131.6 (±16.6)	0.196	131.0 (±16.4)	131.1 (±15.3)	0.894	134.5 (±17.3)	130.4 (±15.7)	0.077
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.7 (±9.6)	79.2 (±8.6)	78.6 (±9.8)	0.599	78.4 (±10.1)	79.3 (±8.7)	0.342	79.5 (±8.9)	78.6 (±9.7)	0.500
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.6% (227/381)	64.5% (60/93)	58.0% (167/288)	0.265	59.2% (138/233)	60.1% (89/148)	0.860	52.7% (29/55)	60.7% (198/326)	0.263
LDL (mg/dl), mean (SD)	97.0 (±34.4)	95.5 (±33.7)	97.4 (±34.6)	0.651	97.6 (±34.0)	96.1 (±35.2)	0.684	96.9 (±37.8)	97.0 (±33.9)	0.986
LDL target achieved‡	50.0% (185/370)	52.9% (45/85)	49.1% (140/285)	0.537	49.1% (114/232)	51.4% (71/138)	0.667	49.1% (26/53)	50.2% (159/317)	0.882
Smoking abstinence	89.4% (380/425)	82.0% (82/100)	91.7% (298/325)	0.006	91.7% (242/264)	85.7% (138/161)	0.053	91.8% (56/61)	89.0% (324/364)	0.512
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	6.0 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.732	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.7)	0.798	5.9 (±0.6)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.440
HbA1c target achieved§	95.5% (341/357)	93.8% (75/80)	96.0% (266/277)	0.386	95.2% (217/228)	96.1% (124/129)	0.677	100% (49/49)	94.8% (292/308)	0.103
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	94.7% (302/319)	94.4% (68/72)	94.7% (234/247)	0.923	94.0% (188/200)	95.8% (114/119)	0.489	97.9% (46/47)	94.1% (256/272)	0.290
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	94.2% (98/104)	96.0 (24/25)	93.7% (74/79)	0.663	95.4% (62/65)	92.3% (36/39)	0.515	85.7% (12/14)	95.6% (86/90)	0.142
Physical activity target achieved	19.1% (82/429)	23.2% (23/99)	17.9% (59/330)	0.235	18.3% (49/268)	20.5% (33/161)	0.572	16.1% (10/62)	19.6% (72/367)	0.518

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Stroke and Vascular Neurology

Retinal microvascular signs and recurrent vascular events in patients with TIA or minor stroke

Supplemental table 1. Baseline characteristics by fundus groups

	No or mild vascular retinopathy		Moderate vascular retinopathy		Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	
	Yes (n=155)	No (n=567)	Yes (n=473)	No (n=249)	Yes (n=94)	No (n=628)
Age (years), mean (\pm SD)	64 (\pm 11)	70 (\pm 9)	70 (\pm 10)	67 (\pm 11)	72 (\pm 7)	68 (\pm 10)
Sex, n (%)						
Female	59 (38.1)	192 (33.9)	160 (33.8)	91 (36.5)	32 (34.0)	219 (34.9)
Male	96 (61.9)	375 (66.1)	313 (66.2)	158 (63.5)	62 (66.0)	409 (65.1)
Study arm, n (%)						
Conventional care	67 (56.8)	285 (50.3)	235 (49.7)	114 (45.8)	47 (50.0)	305 (51.4)
Intensified care	88 (43.2)	282 (49.7)	238 (50.3)	135 (54.2)	47 (50.0)	323 (48.6)
BMI (kg/m ²), mean (\pm SD)	29 (\pm 5)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 5)	27 (\pm 4)	28 (\pm 4)
ABCD2, median (IQR)	4 (3-5)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	4 (4-5)	5 (4-6)	4 (4-5)
NIHSS, median (IQR) [†]	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)
Carotid surgery, n (%)	5 (3.2)	17 (3.0)	13 (2.7)	9 (3.6)	4 (4.3)	18 (2.9)
Vascular risk factors, n (%)						
Hypertension	127 (81.9)	513 (90.5)	423 (89.4)	217 (87.1)	90 (95.7)	550 (87.6)
Diabetes mellitus	41 (26.5)	133 (23.5)	116 (24.5)	58 (23.3)	17 (18.1)	157 (25.0)
Atrial fibrillation	27 (17.4)	100 (17.6)	88 (18.6)	39 (15.7)	12 (12.8)	115 (18.3)
Smoking	43 (27.7)	84 (14.8)	72 (15.2)	55 (22.1)	12 (12.8)	115 (18.3)
Index event, n (%)						
TIA	71 (45.8)	255 (45.0)	223 (47.1)	103 (41.4)	32 (34.0)	294 (46.8)
Minor stroke	84 (54.2)	312 (55.0)	250 (52.9)	146 (58.6)	62 (66.0)	334 (53.2)
Stroke etiology, n (%)						
Large vessel atherosclerosis	16 (10.3)	51 (9.0)	40 (8.5)	27 (10.8)	11 (11.7)	56 (8.9)
Cardioembolism	30 (19.4)	103 (18.2)	88 (18.6)	45 (18.1)	15 (16.0)	118 (18.8)
Small vessel disease	8 (5.2)	51 (9.0)	39 (8.2)	20 (8.0)	12 (12.8)	47 (7.5)
Other etiology	0 (0)	11 (1.9)	11 (2.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (1.8)
Undetermined cause	101 (65.2)	351 (61.9)	295 (62.4)	157 (63.1)	56 (59.6)	396 (63.1)
Previous vascular event, n (%)						
TIA [‡]	9 (5.8)	31 (5.7)	24 (5.3)	16 (6.6)	7 (7.6)	33 (5.5)
Stroke [§]	25 (16.2)	92 (16.5)	70 (15.1)	47 (19.0)	22 (23.7)	95 (15.4)
Myocardial infarction	12 (7.7)	45 (8.1)	37 (7.9)	20 (8.1)	8 (8.6)	49 (7.9)

[†]Data available for 720 patients

[‡]Data available for 696 patients

[§]Data available for 710 patients

^{||}Data available for 714 patients

SD, standard deviation; BMI, body mass index; IQR, interquartile range; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 2. Cox proportional hazards for bivariate hazard ratios

	Composite events (N=109)		Recurrent stroke (N=74)		Acute coronary syndrome (N=20)		Vascular death (N=15)	
	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value	HR (95% CI)	p value
Age	1.04 (1.01-1.06)	0.001	1.04 (1.01-1.07)	0.004	1.03 (0.98-1.09)	0.230	1.03 (0.97-1.09)	0.398
Sex	0.93 (0.62-1.38)	0.703	0.95 (0.58-1.53)	0.819	0.65 (0.23-1.78)	0.396	1.28 (0.46-3.59)	0.640
Study arm (conventional care)	1.08 (0.74-1.57)	0.699	1.02 (0.64-1.61)	0.941	1.53 (0.63-3.75)	0.351	0.90 (0.33-2.48)	0.835
BMI (kg/m ²)	1.00 (0.96-1.04)	0.988	0.99 (0.94-1.04)	0.747	1.00 (0.90-1.10)	0.930	1.05 (0.94-1.16)	0.417
ABCD2	1.16 (0.99-1.36)	0.062	1.27 (1.05-1.54)	0.014	1.04 (0.72-1.52)	0.821	0.86 (0.55-1.33)	0.484
NIHSS†	1.04 (0.97-1.12)	0.284	1.06 (0.97-1.15)	0.202	1.01 (0.84-1.21)	0.928	1.00 (0.81-1.23)	1.000
Carotid surgery	2.06 (0.95-4.48)	0.068	1.18 (0.37-3.82)	0.780	6.06 (1.77-20.74)	0.004	2.36 (0.31-17.98)	0.406
Vascular risk factors								
Hypertension	1.04 (0.54-1.99)	0.914	0.96 (0.44-2.10)	0.920	2.06 (0.28-15.37)	0.483	0.79 (0.18-3.50)	0.757
Diabetes mellitus	1.58 (1.06-2.35)	0.024	1.47 (0.90-2.40)	0.121	1.65 (0.66-4.13)	0.287	2.09 (0.74-5.86)	0.163
Atrial fibrillation	1.07 (0.63-1.83)	0.793	1.41 (0.77-2.59)	0.263	0.67 (0.16-2.90)	0.594	0.36 (0.05-2.76)	0.327
Smoking	1.15 (0.73-1.83)	0.548	0.81 (0.44-1.51)	0.510	1.87 (0.71-4.89)	0.204	2.41 (0.82-7.04)	0.109
Index event (minor stroke)	1.53 (1.04-2.27)	0.033	1.28 (0.80-2.04)	0.298	2.44 (0.89-6.71)	0.084	2.23 (0.71-7.00)	0.170
Stroke etiology								
Large vessel atherosclerosis	1.45 (0.80-2.63)	0.225	1.21 (0.57-2.57)	0.615	4.71 (1.33-16.68)	0.016	0.66 (0.09-5.10)	0.689
Cardioembolism	1.14 (0.67-1.95)	0.634	1.05 (0.54-2.03)	0.888	2.77 (0.78-9.85)	0.114	0.66 (0.15-2.99)	0.592
Small vessel disease	1.05 (0.55-2.00)	0.880	0.52 (0.19-1.45)	0.210	5.59 (1.80-17.37)	0.003	0.63 (0.08-4.88)	0.658
Other etiology	3.73 (1.16-11.95)	0.027	5.69 (1.74-18.57)	0.004	0	0	0	0
Undetermined cause	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Previous vascular event								
TIA‡	1.90 (1.01-3.55)	0.046	2.39 (1.18-4.83)	0.015	0	0	2.54 (0.57-11.34)	0.223
Stroke§	1.61 (1.03-2.51)	0.037	1.38 (0.79-2.41)	0.259	4.37 (1.77-10.75)	0.001	0.40 (0.05-3.04)	0.374
Myocardial infarction	1.98 (1.14-3.42)	0.015	1.31 (0.60-2.86)	0.498	4.12 (1.48-11.45)	0.007	2.89 (0.82-10.25)	0.100
Fundus group								
No or mild vascular retinopathy	Reference		Reference		Reference		Reference	
Moderate vascular retinopathy	1.19 (0.75-1.88)	0.469	1.55 (0.86-2.78)	0.143	0.51 (0.18-1.47)	0.214	1.00 (0.31-3.21)	0.998
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	1.40 (0.79-2.47)	0.248	1.54 (0.76-3.15)	0.234	1.64 (0.55-4.89)	0.374	0.45 (0.05-4.02)	0.474

†Data available for 720 patients

‡Data available for 696 patients

§Data available for 710 patients

||Data available for 714 patients

HR, hazard ratio; CI, confidence intervals; BMI, body mass index; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 3. Post-hoc analysis: Baseline characteristics of patients with diabetes mellitus and hypertension

	Total (n=154)	Composite events		Recurrent stroke	Acute coronary syndrome	Vascular death
		Yes (n=32)	No (n=122)	Yes (n=20)	Yes (n=7)	Yes (n=5)
Age (years), mean (\pm SD)	69 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 11)	69 (\pm 9)	71 (\pm 12)	68 (\pm 10)	70 (\pm 9)
Sex, n (%)						
Female	47 (30.5)	10 (31.3)	37 (30.3)	5 (25.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Male	107 (69.5)	22 (68.8)	85 (69.7)	15 (75.0)	5 (71.4)	2 (40.0)
Study arm, n (%)						
Conventional care	77 (50.0)	20 (37.5)	57 (46.7)	13 (65.0)	4 (57.1)	3 (60.0)
Intensified care	77 (50.0)	12 (62.5)	65 (53.3)	7 (35.0)	3 (42.9)	2 (40.0)
BMI (kg/m ²), mean (SD)	30 (\pm 5)	30 (\pm 4)	30 (\pm 5)	29 (\pm 4)	33 (\pm 4)	30 (\pm 5)
ABCD2, median (IQR)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	4 (3.5-6)
NIHSS, median (IQR)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	1 (0-1)	1 (1-3)	2 (0-2.5)
Carotid surgery, n (%)	7 (4.5)	1 (3.1)	6 (4.9)	0 (0)	1 (14.3)	0 (0)
Vascular risk factors, n (%)						
Atrial fibrillation	21 (12.6)	1 (3.1)	20 (16.4)	1 (5.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Smoking	25 (16.2)	11 (34.4)	14 (11.5)	5 (25.0)	4 (57.1)	2 (40.0)
Index event, n (%)						
TIA	71 (46.1)	15 (46.9)	56 (45.9)	13 (65.0)	1 (14.3)	1 (20.0)
Minor stroke	83 (54.9)	17 (53.1)	66 (54.1)	7 (35.0)	6 (85.7)	4 (80.0)
Stroke etiology, n (%)						
Large vessel atherosclerosis	25 (16.2)	5 (15.6)	20 (16.4)	3 (15.0)	1 (14.3)	1 (20.0)
Cardioembolism	25 (16.2)	4 (12.5)	21 (17.2)	3 (15.0)	1 (14.3)	0 (0)
Small vessel disease	15 (9.7)	5 (15.6)	10 (8.2)	1 (5.0)	3 (42.9)	1 (20.0)
Other etiology	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	1 (0.8)	0 (0)	0	0 (0)
Undetermined cause	88 (57.1)	18 (56.3)	70 (57.4)	13 (65.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Previous vascular event, n (%)						
TIA†	6 (4.0)	1 (3.3)	5 (4.1)	1 (5.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Stroke‡	26 (17.1)	7 (22.6)	19 (15.7)	3 (15.8)	4 (57.1)	0 (0)
Myocardial infarction	19 (12.6)	6 (18.8)	13 (10.7)	2 (10.0)	2 (28.6)	2 (40.0)
Fundus groups, n (%)						
No or mild vascular retinopathy	34 (22.1)	8 (25.0)	26 (21.3)	2 (10.0)	5 (71.4)	1 (20.0)
Moderate vascular retinopathy	103 (66.9)	18 (56.3)	85 (69.7)	13 (65.0)	2 (28.6)	3 (60.0)
Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction	17 (11.0)	6 (18.8)	11 (9.0)	5 (25.0)	0 (0)	1 (20.0)

†Data available for 151 patients

‡Data available for 152 patients

||Data available for 151 patients

SD, standard deviation; BMI, body mass index; IQR, interquartile range; NIHSS, National Institute of Health stroke scale; TIA, transient ischemic attack.

Supplemental table 4. Secondary prevention targets at 1 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (n=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (n=155)	No (n=567)	p-value	Yes (n=473)	No (n=249)	p-value	Yes (n=94)	No (n=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	130.4 (±14.9)	126.8 (±15.5)	131.4 (±14.6)	0.002	131.1 (±14.5)	129.0 (±15.5)	0.088	132.5 (±15.0)	130.1 (±14.9)	0.158
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.7 (±9.6)	77.7 (±10.0)	78.9 (±9.4)	0.197	78.7 (±9.5)	78.5 (±9.8)	0.737	79.7 (±9.4)	78.5 (±9.6)	0.276
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.7% (368/616)	67.7% (90/133)	57.6% (278/483)	0.035	59.1% (237/401)	60.9% (131/215)	0.659	50.0% (41/82)	61.2% (327/534)	0.053
LDL (mg/dl), mean (SD)	93.7 (±34.0)	91.5 (±33.2)	94.3 (±34.3)	0.401	94.1 (±33.6)	93.1 (±35.0)	0.752	95.7 (±37.6)	93.4 (±33.5)	0.570
LDL target achieved‡	54.5% (324/594)	58.9% (76/129)	53.3% (248/465)	0.260	53.4% (206/384)	56.2% (118/210)	0.552	51.9% (42/81)	55.0% (282/513)	0.621
Smoking abstinence	88.3% (564/639)	79.4% (108/136)	90.7% (456/503)	0.001	90.6% (378/417)	83.8% (186/222)	0.010	90.7% (78/86)	87.9% (486/553)	0.451
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.9)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.418	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.810	5.9 (±0.7)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.520
HbA1c target achieved§	95.7% (553/578)	92.7% (115/124)	96.5% (438/454)	0.070	96.3% (364/378)	94.5% (189/200)	0.313	97.4% (74/76)	95.4% (479/502)	0.436
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	93.9% (460/490)	95.2% (99/104)	93.5% (361/386)	0.529	92.8% (297/320)	95.9% (163/170)	0.177	97.0% (64/66)	93.4% (396/424)	0.260
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	91.2% (135/148)	93.8 (30/32)	90.5% (105/116)	0.567	89.7% (87/97)	94.1% (48/51)	0.366	94.7% (18/19)	90.7% (117/129)	0.561
Physical activity target achieved	21.3% (136/639)	27.5% (38/138)	19.6% (98/501)	0.043	20.0% (83/415)	23.7% (53/224)	0.281	17.4% (15/86)	21.9% (121/553)	0.349

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.

Supplemental table 5. Secondary prevention targets at 2 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (N=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (N=155)	No (N=567)	p-value	Yes (N=473)	No (N=249)	p-value	Yes (N=94)	No (N=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	130.0 (±16.0)	126.8 (±15.8)	131.1 (±15.9)	0.015	130.1 (±15.8)	130.0 (±16.3)	0.937	135.1 (±15.7)	129.2 (±15.9)	0.005
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.4 (±8.4)	77.3 (±8.3)	78.7 (±8.4)	0.115	78.4 (±8.3)	78.4 (±8.3)	0.947	80.2 (±8.4)	78.1 (±8.3)	0.046
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.4% (277/466)	65.2% (73/112)	57.6% (204/354)	0.156	60.4% (172/285)	58.0% (105/181)	0.616	46.4% (32/69)	61.7% (245/397)	0.017
LDL (md/dl), mean (SD)	94.6 (±34.7)	90.4 (±32.0)	96.0 (±35.5)	0.140	95.6 (±34.9)	93.2 (±34.5)	0.475	97.9 (±38.2)	94.1 (±34.1)	0.412
LDL target achieved‡	54.1% (242/447)	56.8% (63/111)	53.3% (179/336)	0.523	53.7% (146/272)	54.9% (96/175)	0.807	51.6% (33/64)	54.6% (209/383)	0.655
Smoking abstinence	87.5% (443/506)	81.8% (99/121)	89.4% (344/385)	0.029	89.6% (284/317)	84.1% (159/189)	0.072	88.2% (60/68)	87.4% (383/438)	0.854
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	5.9 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.245	5.9 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.891	5.8 (±0.7)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.109
HbA1c target achieved§	96.3% (418/434)	97.1% (102/105)	96.1% (317/330)	0.608	96.3% (257/267)	96.4% (162/168)	0.925	95.2% (60/63)	96.5% (359/372)	0.621
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	95.5% (359/376)	95.5% (84/88)	95.5% (275/288)	0.990	94.5% (222/235)	97.2% (137/141)	0.223	100% (53/53)	94.7% (306/323)	0.087
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	96.6% (113/117)	96.8% (30/31)	96.5% (83/86)	0.945	95.8% (68/71)	97.8% (45/46)	0.551	100% (15/15)	96.1% (98/102)	0.435
Physical activity target achieved	21.1% (108/511)	22.1% (27/122)	20.8% (81/389)	0.757	21.7% (69/318)	20.2% (39/193)	0.689	16.9% (12/71)	21.8% (96/440)	0.346

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.

Supplemental table 6. Secondary prevention targets at 3 year follow-up by fundus category

	Total (N=722)	No or mild vascular retinopathy			Moderate vascular retinopathy			Vascular retinopathy with vessel rarefaction		
		Yes (N=155)	No (N=567)	p-value	Yes (N=473)	No (N=249)	p-value	Yes (N=94)	No (N=628)	p-value
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	131.0 (±16.0)	129.1 (±13.8)	131.6 (±16.6)	0.196	131.0 (±16.4)	131.1 (±15.3)	0.894	134.5 (±17.3)	130.4 (±15.7)	0.077
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg), mean (SD)	78.7 (±9.6)	79.2 (±8.6)	78.6 (±9.8)	0.599	78.4 (±10.1)	79.3 (±8.7)	0.342	79.5 (±8.9)	78.6 (±9.7)	0.500
Blood pressure target achieved†	59.6% (227/381)	64.5% (60/93)	58.0% (167/288)	0.265	59.2% (138/233)	60.1% (89/148)	0.860	52.7% (29/55)	60.7% (198/326)	0.263
LDL (mg/dl), mean (SD)	97.0 (±34.4)	95.5 (±33.7)	97.4 (±34.6)	0.651	97.6 (±34.0)	96.1 (±35.2)	0.684	96.9 (±37.8)	97.0 (±33.9)	0.986
LDL target achieved‡	50.0% (185/370)	52.9% (45/85)	49.1% (140/285)	0.537	49.1% (114/232)	51.4% (71/138)	0.667	49.1% (26/53)	50.2% (159/317)	0.882
Smoking abstinence	89.4% (380/425)	82.0% (82/100)	91.7% (298/325)	0.006	91.7% (242/264)	85.7% (138/161)	0.053	91.8% (56/61)	89.0% (324/364)	0.512
HbA1c (%), mean (SD)	6.0 (±0.8)	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.8)	0.732	6.0 (±0.8)	5.9 (±0.7)	0.798	5.9 (±0.6)	6.0 (±0.8)	0.440
HbA1c target achieved§	95.5% (341/357)	93.8% (75/80)	96.0% (266/277)	0.386	95.2% (217/228)	96.1% (124/129)	0.677	100% (49/49)	94.8% (292/308)	0.103
Patients taking platelet inhibitors of all patients not taking oral anticoagulation	94.7% (302/319)	94.4% (68/72)	94.7% (234/247)	0.923	94.0% (188/200)	95.8% (114/119)	0.489	97.9% (46/47)	94.1% (256/272)	0.290
Patients with atrial fibrillation taking oral anticoagulation	94.2% (98/104)	96.0 (24/25)	93.7% (74/79)	0.663	95.4% (62/65)	92.3% (36/39)	0.515	85.7% (12/14)	95.6% (86/90)	0.142
Physical activity target achieved	19.1% (82/429)	23.2% (23/99)	17.9% (59/330)	0.235	18.3% (49/268)	20.5% (33/161)	0.572	16.1% (10/62)	19.6% (72/367)	0.518

†<140/85 mmHg in patients who are not diabetic and <130/80 mmHg in patients who are diabetic.

‡Target for LDL was <100 mg/dl and <70 mg/dl in patients with coronary artery disease or symptomatic intracranial or extracranial artery stenosis.

§Target in patients with diabetes was less than 58.5 mmol/mol.

||Target for physical activities (self-reported) was ≥30 min per day at least three times per week

Statistical tests used: independent t test for continuous variables and Pearson Chi square test for categorical variables.

SD, standard deviation; LDL, low density lipoprotein.