

Are graduated compression stockings still essential for VTE prophylaxis in general surgical patients?*

S. L. Schulz¹, B. Steinhilber², U. Saebler¹, S. Müller¹, D. Andresen¹, U. Boer²
(Departments of ¹Internal Medicine, ²General Surgery, Veterans Medical Center Am Urban, Berlin, Germany)

Keywords

venous thromboembolism, VTE prophylaxis, thromboelastic weight loading, graduated compression stockings, pulmonary embolism

Summary

Background: Current guidelines for the prevention of venous thromboembolism in surgical patients continue to recommend the use of graduated compression stockings (GCS) below mechanical weight loading (MMWL). However, the studies documenting a prophylactic benefit have been largely inconclusive and often of low methodological quality.
Primary methods: We studied the rate of symptomatic venous thromboembolism (VTE) occurring in patients of a general surgery department during two consecutive five periods of 24 months with different prophylactic regimens. During the first 24 months (Group A), preventive measures consisted of MMWL and graduated compression stockings. During the second 24 months (Group B) only MMWL was used.
Results: In Group A there were 31 VTE patients with a total of 3538 operations. In Group B there were 29 VTE patients with a total of 2971 operations. 52.1% of the patients in Group A and 54.2% in Group B received VTE prophylaxis (gradings and MMWL in A, MMWL only in B). Symptoms suggesting venous thromboembolism occurred in 45 patients in Group A and in 47 in Group B. Examination of these patients revealed a VTE in 74 and 57 patients.
Conclusions: The incidence of symptomatic venous thromboembolism in patients of a general surgery department was not lower with GCS, but still equal to the current protocol of MMWL. Graduated compression stockings did not yield additional benefits in our patients.

Schlüsselwörter

Venöse Thromboembolie, VTE Prophylaxe, mechanisches Bein-Drucklager, Kompressionsstrümpfe, Lungenembolie

Zusammenfassung

Hintergrund: Aktuelle Leitlinien zum Thema Thromboembolieprophylaxe empfehlen auch bei den Einsatz von Thromboelastikgewichtsbelastung zusätzlich zu mechanischen Bein-Drucklager (MMWL). Jedoch sind Studien, die einen Nutzen dieser Strümpfe belegen, größtenteils von schlechter Qualität.
Primäre Methoden: Wir untersuchten die Häufigkeit von symptomatischen Lungenembolien und Venenthromboembolien bei Patienten einer Allgemeinchirurgie über zwei aufeinanderfolgende 24-Monats-Perioden (Gruppe A) mittels der Thromboelastikgewichtsbelastung und Kompressionsstrümpfe, während der zweiten 24 Monate (Gruppe B) ausschließlich MMWL eingesetzt.
Ergebnisse: In Gruppe A wurden 31 VTE-Patienten bei insgesamt 3538 Operationen, in Gruppe B 29 VTE-Patienten bei insgesamt 2971 Operationen. 52,1% der Patienten in Gruppe A und 54,2% in Gruppe B erhielten Thromboembolieprophylaxe (Kompressionsstrümpfe und MMWL in A, nur MMWL in B). 45 Patienten in Gruppe A und 47 in Gruppe B entwickelten Symptome einer Venenthromboembolie oder Lungenembolie. Bei den betroffenen Patienten ergab sich in Gruppe A bei 74 Patienten eine VTE, in Gruppe B bei 57 Patienten die Diagnose einer VTE.
Schlussfolgerung: Bei einem Einsatz einer Venenthromboembolieprophylaxe mittels Kompressionsstrümpfen und MMWL ist die Inzidenz symptomatischer Venenthromboembolien und Lungenembolien in einer chirurgischen Abteilung sehr gering. Der Einsatz von Thromboelastikgewichtsbelastung belegt unter diesen Voraussetzungen keinen zusätzlichen Nutzen.

Mots clés

Maladie thromboembolique veineuse, prophylaxie, légèreté à des poids mécaniques, les dispositifs à compression élastique, embolie pulmonaire

Résumé

Contexte: Les directives habituelles pour la prévention de la maladie thromboembolique veineuse (MTEV) en chirurgie recommandent de recommander l'usage de bas à compression élastique digressive-mécanique (en complément des légèretés à des poids mécaniques) (MPLM), en particulier chez les patients, qui ont subi un traitement par le thromboélastique, et de faire usage de compression des MPLM en chirurgie.
Principales méthodes: Nous avons étudié l'incidence de MTEV symptomatique survenant dans un département de chirurgie générale au cours de 2 périodes consécutives de 24 mois avec différentes méthodes prophylactiques. Au cours des 24 premiers mois (groupe A) on a utilisé des MPLM et des bas à compression digressive. Au cours des 24 mois suivants (groupe B) seuls des MPLM ont été utilisés.
Résultats: Chez le groupe A 31 VTE patients ont été traités au total de 3538 opérations. Chez le groupe B 29 VTE patients ont été traités au total de 2971 opérations. 52,1% des patients du groupe A et 54,2% du groupe B ont reçu une prophylaxie de la VTE. Malgré tout, 45 patients ont présenté une symptomatologie suggestive une MTE dans le groupe A et 47 dans le groupe B. L'examen a révélé 74 cas de MTE dans le groupe A et 57 dans le groupe B.
Conclusions: L'incidence de MTE symptomatique dans un département de chirurgie a été égale avec ou sans l'utilisation de dispositifs de prévention thromboélastique de manière métrée avec MPLM. Des bas à compression élastique digressive ne semblent pas avoir apporté de bénéfice complémentaire chez nos patients.

Les bas à compression élastique digressive sont-ils essentiels pour la prophylaxie de la maladie thromboembolique en chirurgie générale?

Phlébologie 2008, 37, 372-377

Schlüsselwörter zur Thromboembolieprophylaxe in der Allgemeinchirurgie nach publiziert?

* Diese Arbeit wurde unterstützt durch die 4th Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Phlebologie in Mainz am 15. April 2008. Correspondence: Schulz S. L. (s.schulz@charite.de)

Received: November 19, 2007; accepted in revised form: November 21, 2007

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) continues to account for considerable morbidity, mortality and medical care expense. In the USA the incidence of deep venous thrombosis (DVT) is reported to be approximately 450 000 cases per year and the overall incidence of pulmonary embolism (PE) to be about 355 000 cases per year (8). Numerous studies have indicated that especially surgical and trauma patients are at significant risk for developing venous thromboembolic complications, including pulmonary embolism. Without prophylactic treatment, the risk of VTE (2, 19, 50) is considered to be:

- 25–30% in general surgery (3, 13, 46);
- 60% after major trauma (22, 23) and
- up to 45–70% with hip or knee replacements.

Both physical and pharmacological measures aimed at preventing thromboembolic events have been previously evaluated. In earlier studies graduated compression stockings were found to substantially reduce the incidence of VTE in surgical patients (2, 13, 30, 46, 60). During recent years, however, notable developments in pharmacological thromboprophylaxis have been achieved. The introduction of low molecular weight heparins (LMWH), in particular, has resulted in significant advances in treatment modalities so that today they have become the standard for VTE prophylaxis in most countries. The prophylactic properties of LMWHs have yielded equal or even slightly better outcomes than unfractionated heparins. Moreover, they have fewer side effects, do not require laboratory monitoring, and possess pharmacokinetic characteristics which permit their use as a subcutaneously administered, fixed daily dose. LMWHs are reported to reduce the overall incidence of deep vein thrombosis after general surgery by up to 70% (2, 33).

In light of this progress, reevaluation of the common use of graduated compression stockings, as it is still recommended in this setting, is warranted.

Patients, methods

Study population and design

The study population consisted of all patients treated in a general surgery department over a period of four years.

With a prospective observational study design, the incidence of symptomatic deep venous thrombosis and pulmonary embolism was investigated with two different VTE prophylaxis regimens. During the

- first 24 months (group A) patients at risk received combined treatment for the prevention of thromboembolism consisting of LMWH and graduated compression stockings;
- second 24 month period (group B) only LMWH was used for prophylaxis.

Treatment

Prophylactic treatment was given to all patients undergoing major surgery (>90 min). The treatment was initiated the day before surgery and was continued for five days thereafter, or until complete mobilization was achieved. The prophylactic measures were also taken in patients with minor surgery and patients who were not actually operated on if they were expected to be immobile for more than 6 hours during the day for more than two days. Patients under the age of 14 did not receive VTE prophylaxis.

The thigh-length compression stockings (TED[®] Kendall) in group A were fitted to each patient's legs according to the manufacturer's instructions. The patients were advised to wear them 24 hours a day. Compliance with the wearing of stockings was checked at least twice daily. Patients found without stockings or not wearing them properly on more than two occasions were categorized as non-compliant. Patients with known significant peripheral artery disease (intermittent claudication and/or ABI < 0.7) did not receive stockings.

The LMWH employed in both groups was enoxaparin. It was administered according to a simple weight-adjusted protocol. Patients with a body mass index (BMI)

of up to 30 kg/m² received 20 mg of enoxaparin and patients with BMI > 30 kg/m² received 40 mg – subcutaneously, once daily. Patients in whom the use of LMWH was contraindicated (those with a history of or suspected active HIT II or allergic skin reactions) were treated with 15 mg of fondaparinux subcutaneously, twice daily.

In group B, no stockings were used. The prophylactic treatment consisted of LMWH (or fondaparinux alone, administered following the same protocol as in group A).

All patients in groups A and B were strongly encouraged to get out of bed and walk as early as possible.

Outcomes

In all patients with clinical symptoms suggesting deep vein thrombosis colour-Doppler ultrasonography of the pelvic and leg veins was done, including compression testing of the leg veins. The leg examination included all veins from the thigh down to the ankle. All sonographic examinations were carried out by two highly-skilled examiners with an ATL / Philips HDI 3000 machine, using a 3–7 mHz curved array scanner for the pelvic vein and a 5–7 mHz phased array scanner for the leg veins. If this examination was temporarily not possible, or if the results were inconclusive, ascending phlebography followed.

Patients with symptoms of pulmonary embolism underwent spiral computed tomography of the lungs. This was judged positive if it revealed distinct filling defects in large vessels. If the diagnosis remained inconclusive after this examination, a ventilation-perfusion lung scan (judged positive only in cases of „high probability“ results) and/or a pulmonary angiography was performed.

Results

A total of 6187 patients (Tab. I) were treated in the general surgery department during the study period, with a total of 5861 operations.

Treatment group characteristics

In group A (treated with stockings and LMWH), there were 3181 patients: 1742 men and 1439 women, with a mean age of 48 years. The mean duration of hospital stay was 7.3 days. 2720 of the A patients had surgery with a total of 3090 operations (Tab. 1, Tab. 2). Four hundred sixty-one patients had no surgery. VTE prophylaxis (Tab. 3) was applied to a total of 2623 (82.5%) of the 3181 patients of period A: to 2422 (89.1%) patients with surgery and to 202 (43.8%) patients without surgery. Fifteen patients in group A could not wear compression stockings due to advanced occlusive artery disease and in others because of extreme obesity. Twenty-eight patients were non-compliant with wearing stockings. Three patients in group A needed to be treated with heparin, instead of LMWH, due to contraindications.

In group B (only LMWH), 2986 patients were treated: 1691 men and 1295 women, with a mean age 49 years. The mean duration of hospital stay was 6.2 days and 2551 patients had a total of 2914 operations. Four hundred thirty-three patients had no surgery. VTE prophylaxis was provided to 2512 (84.0%) of the 2986 patients in period B: to 2305 (90.2%) patients with surgery and to 207 (46.0%) patients without surgery. Two patients had to be treated with heparin, instead of LMWH.

Tab. 1
Atrial characteristics,
type of surgery

		group B	
		LMWH + stocking	LMWH only
patients	total number, sex	1991	1795
	men	1242	1091
	women	1429	1295
	age (years)	48	49
	days of stay	7.3	6.2
type of surgery	vascular	261	157
	thyroid	149	104
	choleci	119	62
	total colect	49	45
	gastrointestinal	227	153
	urologic sup	99	104
	urologic	176	109
	gyn	215	205
	law	3	4
	gallbladder resected	44	29
	gallbladder sup	796	384
	pancreas	3	3
	hepatocyst resected	257	81
	hepatocyst sup	28	44
	colostomy resected	42	33
	urothelium	190	93
	cholecys	226	202
	retroperitoneal infarct resected	45	29
	duodenal (pancreas, resected/infarct)	81	81
	stomach resect resect	167	173
urothelium	25	29	
total	3090	2914	

Outcomes (Tab. 4)

Deep vein thrombosis

Thirty-eight patients in group A and 40 in group B developed clinical symptoms suggestive of a deep vein thrombosis which required further investigation. Thirty patients in A and 31 patients in B received color-doppler assisted compression sonography and eight patients in A and nine in B received phlebography. A DVT was confirmed in six patients in group A and in three patients in group B.

Tab. 2
Number of operations
per patient

number of operations	group B		p value
	LMWH + stocking	LMWH only	
1	2517	1349	0.000
2	127	24	0.710
3	44	45	0.650
4	18	19	0.590
5	9	3	0.890
6	3	10	0.150
7	0	1	0.200
≥8	0	1	0.200

376
Schieff et al.

	VTE prophylaxis	group A	group B	P value
		LMWH + stockings	LMWH only	
without surgery	—	718	706	
with surgery	—	1735	2553	0.002
	+	2629 (89%)	2604 (90.2%)	0.37
without surgery	—	683	802	0.997
	+	702 (85.2%)	702 (87.7%)	0.295
total	+	2629 (85.2%)	2707 (89%)	0.11

—: not defined by patients.

Table 3
VTE prophylaxis

	group A	group B	P value
	LMWH + stockings	LMWH only	
operative	663 patients	663 patients	
days	3075	717	
phlebography	67	99	
post-D	51	42	
post-physical exam	118	69	
post-angiography	39	37	
total interventions	867	478	0.005
patients with VTE	7	5	0.667
incidence	0.8	0.7	0.87

Table 4
Interventions and VTE rates

Pulmonary embolism

A pulmonary embolism was suspected in six patients in group A and seven in group B during their hospital stay. 12 of these patients underwent spiral computed tomography of the lungs, one patient had a ventilation-perfusion scan and one needed an additional pulmonary angiogram. The pulmonary embolism was confirmed in one patient in group A and in three in group B.

Characteristics of patients with VTE

All the 12 patients (7 in group A, 5 in group B) with confirmed VTE were receiving prophylaxis at the time the VTE event occurred. The mean duration of hospital stay in these patients was 38 days in group A and 39 days in group B. All patients with PE in both groups had no ligament disease.

Discussion

This study, which took place over a period of four years and involved 6167 patients on a general surgery ward, revealed no significant differences in the incidence of asymptomatic venous thromboembolism whether graduated compression stockings were used in addition to LMWH prophylaxis, or not.

A review of the literature over the last three decades shows that, despite significant advancements in the prevention of venous thromboembolism, there is still a considerable degree of variation in regard to risk group definition, the number of patients receiving prophylaxis, and prophylactic modalities.

To achieve better standardization in VTE prophylaxis, several consensus conferences have generated guidelines which are aimed at promoting and attaining adequate VTE prophylaxis for the individual patient. Yet, even the latest guidelines concerning the

prevention of thromboembolism in surgical patients, namely the updated ACCP guidelines from 2004 (24) and those of the International Consensus Statement dating from 2006 (46), are not completely concordant. In regard to general surgery patients, the former do not recommend a specific prophylaxis in low-risk patients, propose the alternative use of stockings or heparin in moderate- and high-risk patients, and recommend combination therapy only in very high-risk patients. The latter consider the use of compression stockings in low risk patients, recommend stockings with intermittent pneumatic compression as an alternative to LMWH in moderate risk patients with bleeding tendency and only consider compression stockings as an adjunct to LMWH in high-risk patients. In other fields of surgery (for example oncologic surgery or gynecologic surgery) there is even less evidence for the necessity of compression stockings. In these fields the recommendations are either extrapolated from general surgery or consensus concerning the use of compression stockings are lacking - as it also the case in all recently published studies on VTE prophylaxis in medical patients (26, 41, 52).

There are generally nine studies cited which substantiate significant VTE risk reduction following the use of graduated compression stockings in general surgery (65). All of them were carried out 10 or more years ago (3, 4, 28, 43, 48, 56, 58, 63, 64). The study designs are rather heterogeneous and most of them included a total of less than 100 patients (5, 28, 48, 56, 58). Only two out of the nine studies (3, 28) compared the use of stockings with the absence of prophylactic measures. These found a 50% reduction in the rate of venous thromboembolism in patients who wore stockings. In the seven other studies, a combination therapy was used consisting of either intermittent pneumatic compression (43, 56) or pharmacological methods (dextran, low dose heparin, dilydrogesterone-heparin) together with graduated compression stockings (3, 43, 48, 63, 64). In five of the studies the effectiveness of compression stockings was investigated on only one of the patient's legs; the other leg served as a control (5, 43, 55, 56, 58).

Several studies in the following years have provided evidence that low dose heparin significantly reduced the incidence of postoperative VTE, and the benefit appeared to increase with the additional use of compression stockings (11, 15, 31, 32, 45). Subsequently, low dose heparin in combination with compressive stockings became the most widely adopted measure for VTE prophylaxis in general surgery – a regimen which has been used in many facilities until today (4, 10, 12, 65).

When LMWHs were introduced into VTE prophylaxis in the mid-1990s, they first proved their effectiveness in orthopedic surgery, namely with hip and knee replacements. Later LMWHs were adopted in general surgery and were combined with the compression stocking prophylaxis already in use. Only four studies can be found which show an advantage to the combination of LMWH with compression stockings over stockings alone – none of them in general surgery (1, 38, 42, 47). In all four studies the group employing compression stockings alone is categorized as a placebo group. However, the incidence of VTE in these placebo groups is actually about the same as in previous studies where no prophylactic measures were used. Only one single, rather small study has compared, as we have, the use of LMWH in combination with compression stockings to LMWH alone for VTE prophylaxis. Katsifiki et al. (34), randomized 78 patients undergoing a total hip replacement into three groups:

- a control group without prophylaxis;
- a group which received enoxaparin once daily;
- a group which received enoxaparin and wore graduated compression stockings (TED) for a period of 8–10 days.

All patients had a preoperative perfusion leg scan and a postoperative perfusion-ventilation scan, as well as bilateral ascending phlebography between days 8 and 12. The DVT rates were 93%, 38% and 25%, respectively. No other study comparing LMWH with and without stockings has been published as of today – neither in general surgery nor in any other medical specialty.

The mechanism of action through which compression stockings prevent thrombo-

embolism remains unclear, though it is thought to be multi-functional with a reduction in venous diameter playing the key role. External compression was shown to reduce the overall cross-sectional area of the lower limb and increase the flow velocity within the veins. Compression also appears to improve the evacuation and repletion of incompetent and incompletely emptied valvular cusps. Reduction in reflux-related stasis and augmented flow velocity could decrease the risk of thrombus formation by reducing venous wall distension, local contact time, and the concentration of coagulation reactants (2, 14, 57, 61, 66).

Despite their widespread use, there is also no agreement as to the most effective stocking design to achieve the above mentioned effects. High-length TED stockings, which are probably employed in most studies, have intended pressures of 18 mmHg at the ankle, 14 mmHg at the calf, 8 mmHg at the knee, 0 mmHg above the knee, and 0 mmHg at the thigh. It is not known whether these pressures are optimal. Moreover, some authors estimate calf-length stockings to be more effective than thigh-length and some prefer non-elastic ones (2, 9, 26). Stocking design is not always specified in the study protocols and, particularly in some of the newer studies, it is not clear whether or not stockings were used at all (8, 27, 39, 44, 59, 41, 35, 32).

Even those stockings believed to be ideally designed may not achieve the warranted effects. A study measuring pressure gradients in patients wearing prophylaxis stockings showed that 90% of the stockings failed to produce the ideal pressure gradient of 18–14–8 from the ankle to the knee; 54% even produced an inverse gradient (7, 67).

Given the recommended pressure gradients intended to be realized by the design of prophylaxis stockings, it remains obscure why other types of compression stockings, e.g., those recommended for the prevention of post-thrombotic syndrome following a deep vein thrombosis, achieve significantly higher pressure ranges (mostly 40–30–21 mmHg) although they must be worn for much longer time periods. These higher pressure compressive stockings fail, however, to prevent DVT recurrence, whereas

prophylaxis stockings are claimed to reduce DVT incidence by 50% or more (9, 37).

Finally, prophylaxis stockings were considered for supine patients (61). However, today most patients are mobilized within only a few hours after surgery. Nevertheless guidelines recommend stockings for 5–7 days (61).

Unlike most other studies, ours did not serially screen all our study patients for deep venous thrombosis or pulmonary embolism. The significance of an asymptomatic VTE detected by screening methods such as ^{99m}Tc fibrinogen marking, phlebimetry, contrast phlebography, compression sonography, D-dimer testing, or ventilation-perfusion scans is a matter of debate (6, 35, 40, 54). Conclusive evidence that treatment of asymptomatic patients with VTE detected by these methods results in better outcomes is lacking, not only in regard to nonfatal or fatal pulmonary embolism (35), but also in regard to postthrombotic syndrome (25) and pulmonary hypertension (48). Recent study designs have begun to focus more, as we have, on symptomatic thromboembolic events as clinically relevant endpoints (41).

Limitations

We cannot rule out the possibility of diagnostic bias in our study, since the use of stockings cannot be blinded and for organizational reasons we were not able to perform randomization. It is possible that physicians were more likely to order an imaging test for patients who had not received compression stockings than for those who had. Nevertheless, the incidence of asymptomatic VTE in our surgical patients was very low with both prophylaxis regimens.

A decline in VTE rates in clinical medicine has been anticipated in recent years (17, 23). Research in this area is lacking, but considering the still doubtless significance of the Virchow triad in regard to VTE pathogenesis, the current prevailing concept of early mobilization is likely to be the most effective measure contributing towards the prevention of thromboembolism in all areas of medicine. New surgical techniques, especially endoscopic and fast track surgery and modern anesthesiologic methods, are

also reported to reduce VTE rates (49, 51, 53). Furthermore, complicated risk stratification concepts are increasingly being disregarded in favor of simple and effective protocols like the one we used with our surgical patients (24) and finally, new, even more potent, anti-thrombotic agents are being developed (16, 28, 21, 49).

Conclusion

Our data showed that the rate of symptomatic venous thromboembolism in patients in a general surgery ward is kept low when a concept of early mobilization and a simple, but strictly applied protocol of preventative low molecular weight heparin is implemented. Graduated compression stockings did not yield an additional preventive effect with this regimen.

References

1. Agelli G, Perrella F, Biondronchi P, Sestini P, Pini M, P. Angeli A, et al. Enoxiparin plus compression stockings compared with compression stockings alone in the prevention of venous thromboembolism after elective nonorthopedic surgery. *N Engl J Med* 1999; 340: 86-92.
2. Agui G, Harthorn G, Baker D. Graduated compression stockings in the prevention of venous thromboembolism. *Br J Surg* 1999; 86: 1002-1004.
3. Aljai A, Williams D, Butler D, Le Quesne L.P. The use of graduated compression stockings in the prevention of postoperative deep vein thrombosis. *Br J Surg* 1995; 82: 172-174.
4. Arangis SS, Lee TA. Elastic compression stockings for prevention of deep vein thrombosis. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2003; 3: CD001484.
5. Duggan B, Lindblad B. The thromboprophylactic effect of graded compression stockings in combination with heparin. *Br Arch Surg* 1994; 119: 1329-1331.
6. Brennan R, Bain S, Brannan B, Sang G, Dore S, G. Cullen D. Venous sonography for the diagnosis of asymptomatic venous thrombosis in patients with cancer undergoing chemotherapy. *J Ultrasound Med* 2004; 23: 675-678.
7. Borel A, Williams S, Cramer A, Shaw B, Strong P, Hill M. Elastic compression stockings in elective orthopedic surgery. An assessment of the in vivo performance of commercially available stockings in patients having hip and knee arthroplasty. *J Bone Joint Surg Br* 2000; 82: 116-119.
8. Bick RL, Kaplan EL. Thromboprophylaxis in surgical patients. *Am J Med Res* 2004; 9: 104-111.

9. Dimarco B, Butler DR, Burgess H, O'Rourke MV, de Bak M. Leg Band Trial. Randomized trial of effect of compression stockings in patients with symptomatic proximal vein thrombosis. *Lancet* 1997; 349: 790-792.
10. Caputo D, Anselmi J, Sighel LR, Colucci FB, Ferreri D. The use of low molecular weight heparin for the prevention of postoperative venous thromboembolism in general surgery: A survey of practice in the United States. *Br J Surg* 2002; 89: 78-80.
11. Clague GE, Ransohoff JS. Prevention of venous thromboembolism in general surgical patients: Results of meta-analysis. *Ann Surg* 1999; 229: 227-240.
12. Clague GE. Prevention of postoperative venous thromboembolism: An update. *Am J Surg* 1998; 166: 745-752.
13. Collins GA, Taylor RL, Ortiz G. Rates of venous thromboses after general surgery: Combined results of randomized clinical trials. *Lancet* 1996; 348: 143-146.
14. Colkerde Smith PH, Harty DJ, Scurr JH. Deep vein thrombosis: effect of graduated compressive stockings on duration of deep veins of the calf. *Br J Surg* 1994; 78: 724-726.
15. Collins R, Scraggs R, Yusuf S, Peto R. Reduction of fatal pulmonary embolism and venous thrombosis by postoperative administration of subcutaneous heparin. Overview of clinical randomized studies in general orthopedic and oncologic surgery. *N Engl J Med* 1998; 338: 1162-1173.
16. Colwell CW, Berkowitz SD, Davidson BL, Lallo PA, Ginsberg JS, Lefkowitz DR, et al. Comparison of Ximelagatran as out-patient thromboprophylaxis with enoxaparin for the prevention of venous thromboembolism following total hip replacement. A randomized double-blind study. *J Thromb Haemost* 2004; 3: 2119-2126.
17. Denti R, Maney-Lange B. Incidence of thromboembolism after transcatheter resection of the prostate (TURP) - a study on TED stocking prophylaxis and heparin treatment. *Scand J Urol Nephrol* 2002; 36: 119-121.
18. Durrant H, Lindgreen TW, Quinlan DR, Wilton AN, Gougher MA. Short-duration prophylaxis against venous thromboembolism after total hip or knee replacement: A meta-analysis of prospective studies investigating symptomatic outcomes. *Arch Intern Med* 2002; 162: 1465-1471.
19. Eichinger S, Kralj PA. Prevention of deep vein thrombosis in orthopedic surgery. *Am J Med Res* 2004; 9: 112-118.
20. Eriksson BI, Bauer KA, Lassen MR, Bajbouj A. Enoxaparin compared with enoxaparin for the prevention of venous thromboembolism after hip fracture surgery. *N Engl J Med* 2001; 345: 1796-1804.
21. Evans RC, Paine CM, Keele B. Ximelagatran/Ximelagatran a review of its use in the prevention of venous thromboembolism in orthopedic surgery. *Thromb* 2004; 64: 640-670.
22. Green WH, Ay RM, Code RI, Chan F, Szabo DF, Schulz JA, et al. A comparison of low-dose heparin with low molecular weight heparin or prophylax

- is against venous thromboembolism after major surgery. *N Engl J Med* 1996; 335: 701-707.
23. Green WH, Chan F, Clague GE. Prevention of venous thromboembolism. *Chest* 2003; 124: 1328.
24. Green WH, Paine RM, Chan F, Bergqvist D, Lassen MR, Colwell CW, et al. Prevention of venous thromboembolism: The Seventh ACCP Conference on Antithrombotic and Thrombolytic Therapy. *Chest* 2004; 126: 376-410.
25. Ginsberg JS, Tackx JJ, Butler DR, MacKinnon R, Singer S, Durrant H. Post-thrombotic syndrome after hip and knee arthroplasty: a cross-sectional study. *Arch Intern Med* 2000; 160: 699-702.
26. Harwood SJ, Lawson DL, Tomchasz EJ, Goldberg PE. Short knee-length versus long-length graduated compression stockings in the prevention of deep venous thrombosis. *Semin Surg Oncol* 2002; 23: 15-19.
27. Hillman M, Lala J, Sotomayor K, Lehmann L, Nune S, Kaul M. Enoxaparin vs heparin for prevention of deep-vein thrombosis in acute ischemic stroke: a randomized double-blind study. *Ann Neurol* 2002; 51: 94-97.
28. Holbrook CJ. Graduated compression for preventing deep-vein thrombosis. *Drugs* 1996; 52: 969-976.
29. Horlander KJ, Mezzo JMV, Lipson KV. Pulmonary embolism mortality in the United States: 1979-1998: an analysis using multiple cause mortality data. *Arch Intern Med* 2003; 163: 1711-1717.
30. Jeffrey PC, Nicolaides AN. Graduated compression stockings in the prevention of postoperative deep vein thrombosis. *Br J Surg* 1999; 77: 340-343.
31. Kakkar VV, Connors T, Speroff T, Brooks DR, Hirsh J, Colwell CW, et al. Venous prophylaxis after hip surgery. A double-blind randomized trial. *Lancet* 1972; 2: 391-396.
32. Kakkar VV, Connors LF, Brooks DR, Bullard L, Therasil P. Prevention of deep-vein postoperative pulmonary embolism by low doses of heparin: Reappraisal of results of international multicentric trial. *Lancet* 1977; 1: 567-569.
33. Kakkar VV, De Lorenzo F. Prevention of venous thromboembolism in general surgery. *Baillieres Clin Haematol* 1999; 12: 605-619.
34. Kalkreuth H, Koppertgen R, Nicholas AN, Jurek J, Hill S, Ayres P, et al. Deep venous thrombosis prophylaxis with low molecular weight heparin and elastic compression stocking for total hip replacement: A randomized controlled trial. *Br J Surg* 1996; 83: 162-169.
35. Keenan C. Noninvasive diagnosis of deep vein thrombosis in postoperative patients. *Semin Thromb Haemost* 2004; 31: 3-9.
36. Kober PA, Witt C, Vogel G, Koppertgen R, Schomker U, Therasil W. A randomized comparison of enoxaparin with unfractionated heparin for the prevention of venous thromboembolism in medical patients with heart failure or acute respiratory distress. The Prince study group. *Am Heart J* 2003; 145: 624-631.
37. Kulkarni SN, Schulz MW, Henschke R, Narayan SA, Price MR. Non-pharmacological measures for prevention of post-thrombotic syndrome. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2004; 4: CD004174.