



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation

American Society of Echocardiology



## Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question

### 1 Don't order follow up or serial echocardiograms for surveillance after a finding of trace valvular regurgitation on an initial echocardiogram.

Trace mitral, tricuspid and pulmonic regurgitation can be detected in 70% to 90% of normal individuals and has no adverse clinical implications. The clinical significance of a small amount of aortic regurgitation with an otherwise normal echocardiographic study is unknown.

### 2 Don't repeat echocardiograms in stable, asymptomatic patients with a murmur/click, where a previous exam revealed no significant pathology.

Repeat imaging to address the same question, when no pathology has been previously found and there has been no clinical change in the patient's condition, is not indicated.

### 3 Avoid echocardiograms for preoperative/perioperative assessment of patients with no history or symptoms of heart disease.

Perioperative echocardiography is used to clarify signs or symptoms of cardiovascular disease, or to investigate abnormal heart tests. Resting left ventricular (LV) function is not a consistent predictor of perioperative ischemic events; even reduced LV systolic function has poor predictive value for perioperative cardiac events.

### 4 Avoid using stress echocardiograms on asymptomatic patients who meet "low risk" scoring criteria for coronary disease.

Stress echocardiography is mostly used in symptomatic patients to assist in the diagnosis of obstructive coronary artery disease. There is very little information on using stress echocardiography in asymptomatic individuals for the purposes of cardiovascular risk assessment, as a stand-alone test or in addition to conventional risk factors.

### 5 Avoid transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) to detect cardiac sources of embolization if a source has been identified and patient management will not change.

Tests whose results will not alter management should not be ordered. Protocol-driven testing can be useful if it serves as a reminder not to omit a test or procedure, but should always be individualized to the particular patient. While TEE is safe, even the small degree of risk associated with a procedure is not justified if there is no expected clinical benefit.

# How This List Was Created

The American Society of Echocardiography's (ASE) Advocacy Committee reviewed the ASE/multisociety Appropriate Use Criteria (AUC) for echocardiography. This committee includes many of the AUC's authors as well as ASE leaders who engage with payers and regulatory agencies to achieve high-value imaging use. Testing scenarios were chosen based on the highest likelihood of improving patient care and reducing inappropriate test use. Members of the committee, under the guidance of its chair, transformed the scenarios into plain language and produced the evidentiary statements for each. ASE's members participated in an online poll on the recommendations, which were then given final approval by ASE's Executive Committee.

ASE's disclosure and conflict of interest policy can be found at [www.asecho.org](http://www.asecho.org).

## Sources

**1** Douglas PS, Garcia MJ, Haines DE, Lai WW, Manning WJ, Patel AR, Picard MH, Polk DM, Ragosta M, Ward RP, Weiner RB. ACCF/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 appropriate use criteria for echocardiography: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation Appropriate Use Criteria Task Force, American Society of Echocardiography, American Heart Association, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, Heart Rhythm Society, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society of Critical Care Medicine, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. *J Am Soc Echocardiogr* 2011;24:229-67.

Bonow RO, Carabello BA, Chatterjee K, de Leon AC Jr, Faxon DP, Freed MD, Gaasch WH, Lytle BW, Nishimura RA, O'Gara PT, O'Rourke RA, Otto CM, Shah PM, Shanewise JS. 2008 focused update incorporated into the ACC/AHA 2006 guidelines for the management of patients with valvular heart disease: a report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines (Writing Committee to Develop Guidelines for the Management of Patients With Valvular Heart Disease. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2008;52:e1-142. Available from: [content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1139232](http://content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1139232).

**2** Douglas PS, Garcia MJ, Haines DE, Lai WW, Manning WJ, Patel AR, Picard MH, Polk DM, Ragosta M, Ward RP, Weiner RB. ACCF/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 appropriate use criteria for echocardiography: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation Appropriate Use Criteria Task Force, American Society of Echocardiography, American Heart Association, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, Heart Rhythm Society, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society of Critical Care Medicine, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. *J Am Soc Echocardiogr* 2011;24:229-67.

**3** Douglas PS, Garcia MJ, Haines DE, Lai WW, Manning WJ, Patel AR, Picard MH, Polk DM, Ragosta M, Ward RP, Weiner RB. ACCF/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 appropriate use criteria for echocardiography: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation Appropriate Use Criteria Task Force, American Society of Echocardiography, American Heart Association, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, Heart Rhythm Society, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society of Critical Care Medicine, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. *J Am Soc Echocardiogr* 2011;24:229-67.

Fleisher LA, Beckman JA, Brown KA, Calkins H, Chaikof EL, Fleischmann KE, Freeman WK, Froehlich JB, Kasper EK, Kersten JR, Riegel B, Robb JF. 2009 ACCF/AHA focused update on perioperative beta blockade incorporated into the ACC/AHA 2007 guidelines on perioperative cardiovascular evaluation and care for noncardiac surgery: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation/ American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2009;54:e13-118. Available from: [content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1140211](http://content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1140211).

**4** Douglas PS, Garcia MJ, Haines DE, Lai WW, Manning WJ, Patel AR, Picard MH, Polk DM, Ragosta M, Ward RP, Weiner RB. ACCF/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 appropriate use criteria for echocardiography: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation Appropriate Use Criteria Task Force, American Society of Echocardiography, American Heart Association, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, Heart Rhythm Society, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society of Critical Care Medicine, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. *J Am Soc Echocardiogr* 2011;24:229-67.

Gibbons RJ, Abrams J, Chatterjee K, Daley J, Deedwania PC, Douglas JS, Ferguson TB Jr, Fihn SD, Fraker TD Jr, Gardin JM, O'Rourke RA, Pasternak RC, Williams SV. ACC/AHA 2002 guideline update for the management of patients with chronic stable angina: a report of the American College of Cardiology/ American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines (Committee to Update the 1999 Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Chronic Stable Angina). 2002. Available from: [www.cardiosource.org/](http://www.cardiosource.org/)~/media/Images/ACC/Science%20and%20Quality/Practice%20Guidelines/s/stable\_clean.ashx.

Greenland P, Alpert JS, Beller GA, Benjamin EJ, Budoff MJ, Fayad ZA, Foster E, Hlatky MA, Hodgeson JMB, Kushner FG, Lauer MS, Shaw LJ, Smith SC, Jr, Taylor AJ, Weintraub WS, Wenger NK. 2010 ACCF/AHA guideline for assessment of cardiovascular risk in asymptomatic adults: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2010;56:e50-103. Available from: [content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1143997](http://content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1143997).

**5** Douglas PS, Garcia MJ, Haines DE, Lai WW, Manning WJ, Patel AR, Picard MH, Polk DM, Ragosta M, Ward RP, Weiner RB. ACCF/AHA/ASNC/HFSA/HRS/SCAI/SCCM/SCCT/SCMR 2011 appropriate use criteria for echocardiography: a report of the American College of Cardiology Foundation Appropriate Use Criteria Task Force, American Society of Echocardiography, American Heart Association, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, Heart Failure Society of America, Heart Rhythm Society, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, Society of Critical Care Medicine, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. *J Am Soc Echocardiogr* 2011;24:229-67.

## About the ABIM Foundation

The mission of the ABIM Foundation is to advance medical professionalism to improve the health care system. We achieve this by collaborating with physicians and physician leaders, medical trainees, health care delivery systems, payers, policymakers, consumer organizations and patients to foster a shared understanding of professionalism and how they can adopt the tenets of professionalism in practice.

To learn more about the ABIM Foundation, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).



## About the American Society of Echocardiography

As the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging, the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines. Comprised of over 15,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses and scientists, ASE is a strong voice providing guidance, expertise and education to its members with a commitment to improving the practice of ultrasound and imaging of the heart and cardiovascular system for better patient outcomes.



For more information about ASE, visit [www.asecho.org](http://www.asecho.org) or our patient website, [www.seemyheart.com](http://www.seemyheart.com).