

Can We Validate New Guidelines for Indications of Elective Ascending Thoracic Aortic Aneurysm Surgery?

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Houston Aortic Symposium, March 3, 2026

Disclosures

- No disclosures.

ACC/AHA CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

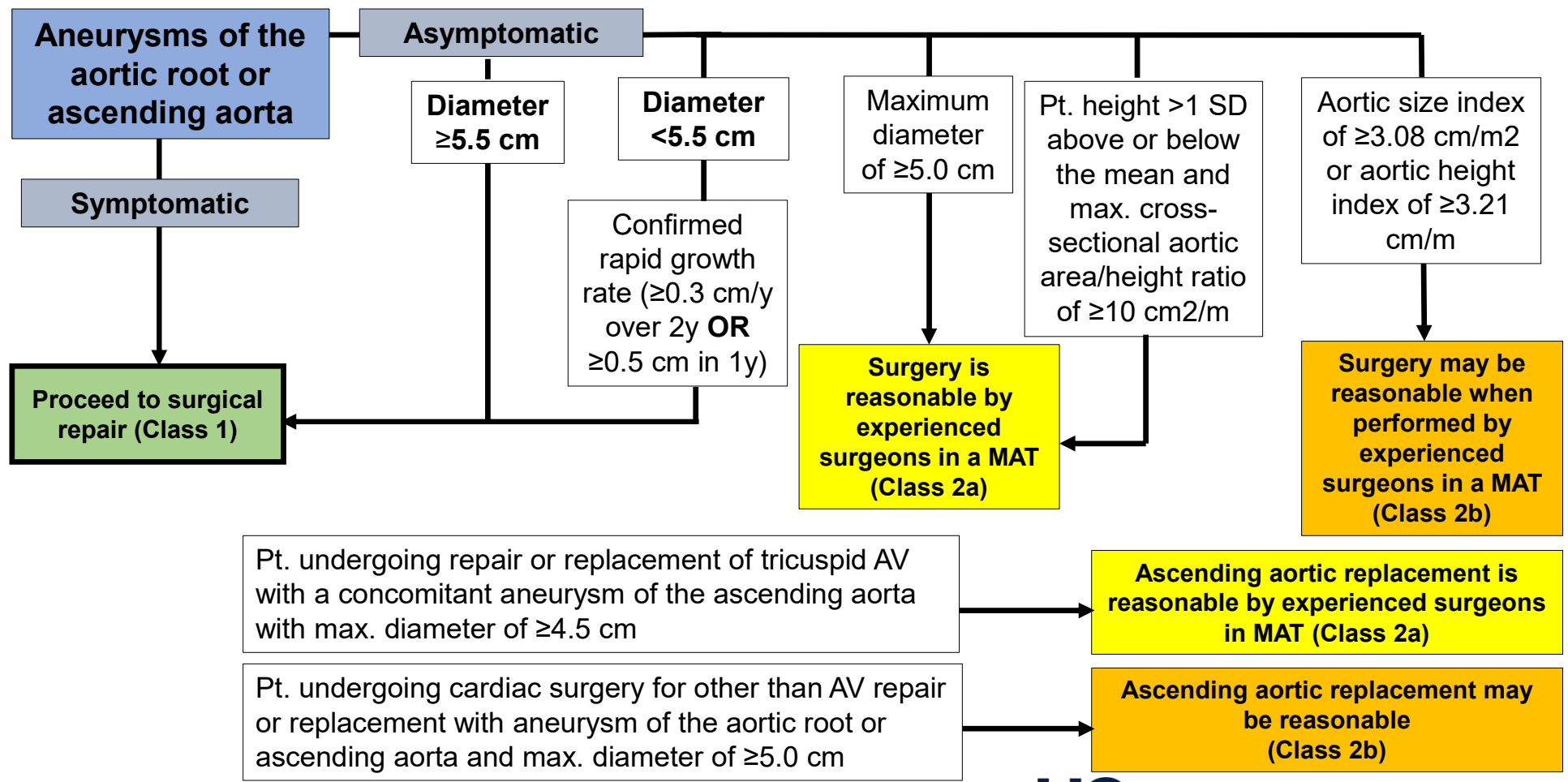
2022 ACC/AHA Guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Aortic Disease: A Report of the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines

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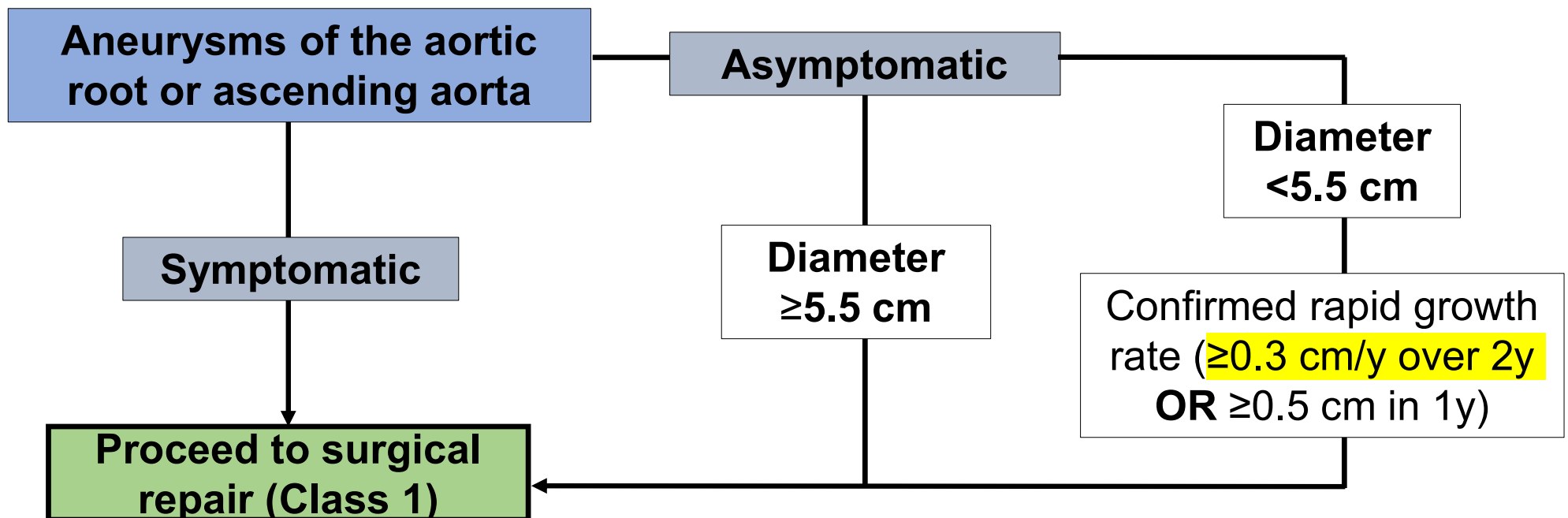
AHA/ACC Guidelines: Surgery for Sporadic Aneurysms of Aortic Root & Ascending Aorta



AV indicates aortic valve; cm, centimeter; CT, computed tomography; yr, year; MAT, multidisciplinary aortic team; max, maximal; pt, patient; SD, standard deviation; and y, year.

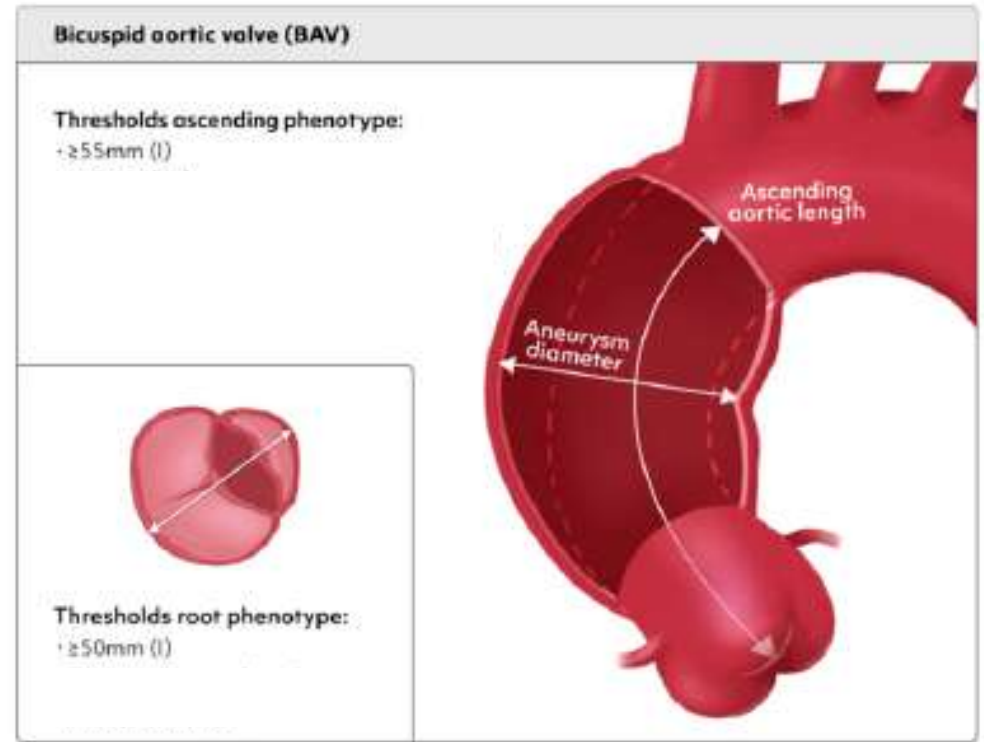
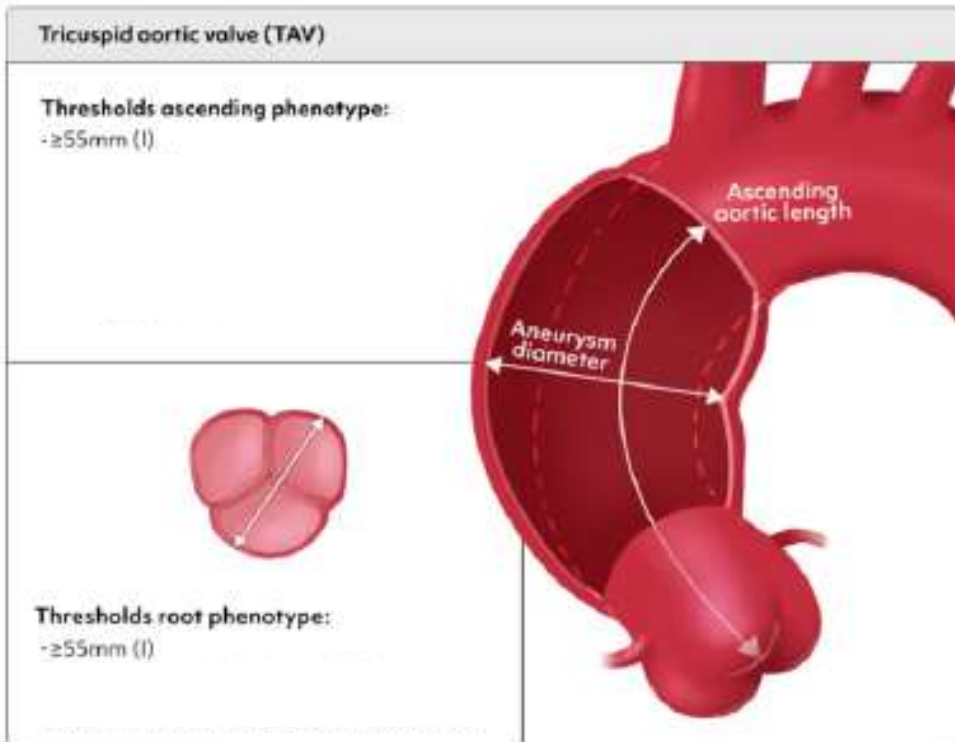


AHA/ACC Guidelines: Surgery for Sporadic Aneurysms of Aortic Root and Ascending Aorta



EACTS/STS Guidelines: Surgery for Root and Ascending Aortic Sporadic Aneurysms

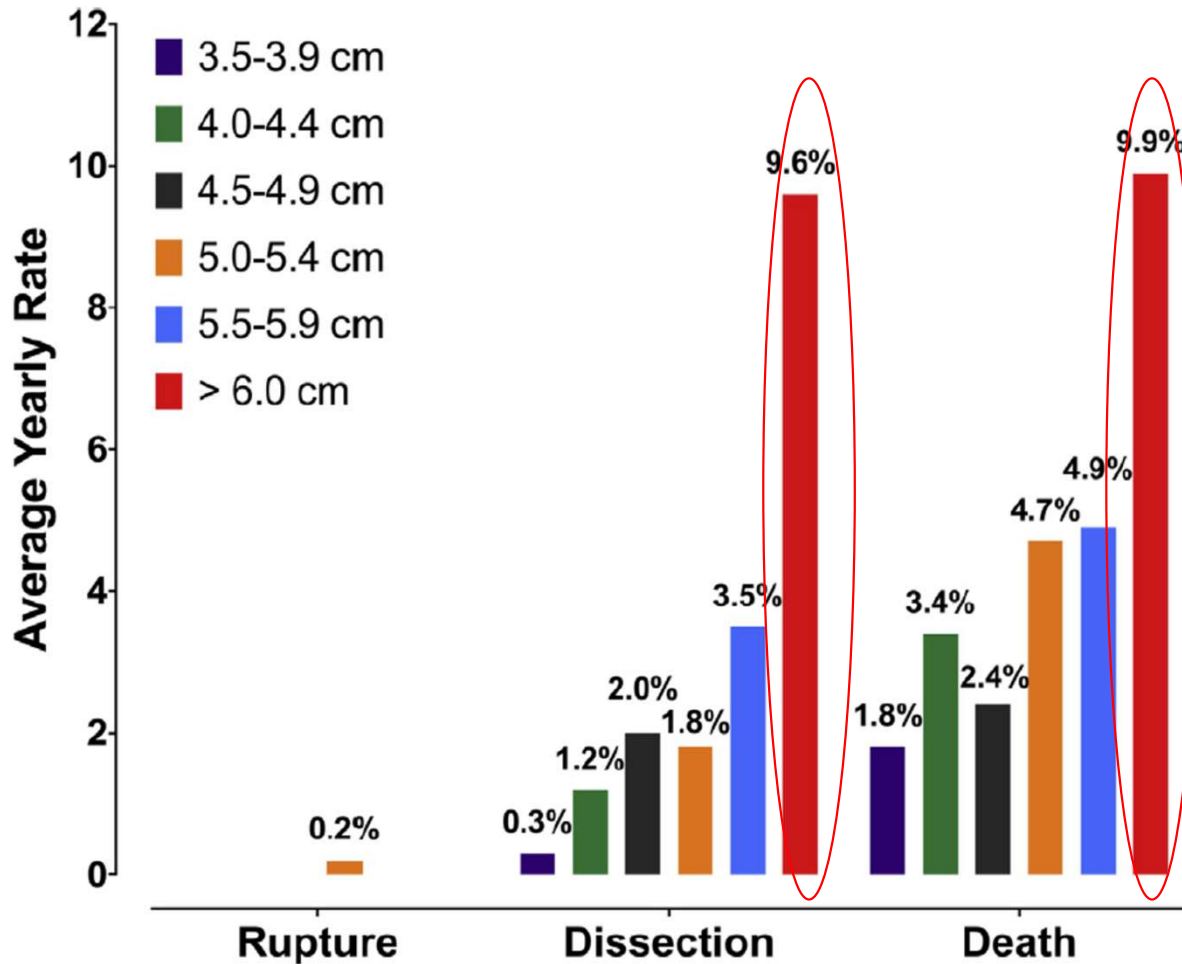
Thresholds for Intervention in Aortic Root and Ascending Aortic Aneurysm



UCSF Department of Surgery

Czerny. EACTS/STS Guidelines for diagnosing and treating acute and chronic syndromes of the aortic organ. EJCTS 2024;65(2)ezad426

Guideline Data: Yale Natural History Study





- 3349 TAA pts total
- 780 aTAA pts
- Radiology 1272 size measurements
- Mean f/u 48mo
- Marfan 4%, Fam Hx 22%
- 5.5-5.9cm 3.5% dissection, and 6.8% rupture, AD, death

Validation: ATAA in VA Health System

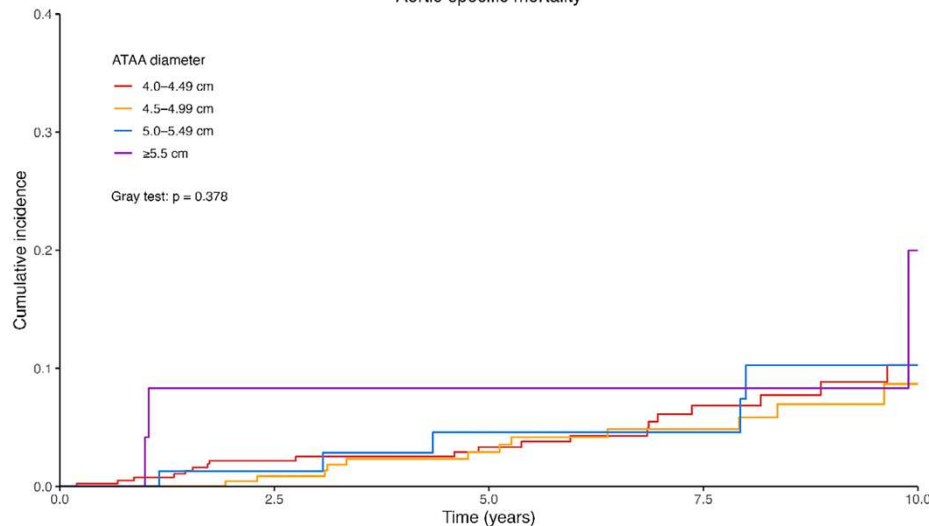
Journal of the American Heart Association

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Ascending Thoracic Aortic Aneurysms in a Veterans Affairs Health System: Longitudinal Outcomes and Risk Factors

Axel Gomez , MD; William Carroway, MD; Sally Tu, BS; Vidur Kailash , BA; Liang Ge, PhD; Marko Boskovski , MD, MHS, MPH; Elaine E. Tseng , MD

Aortic-specific mortality

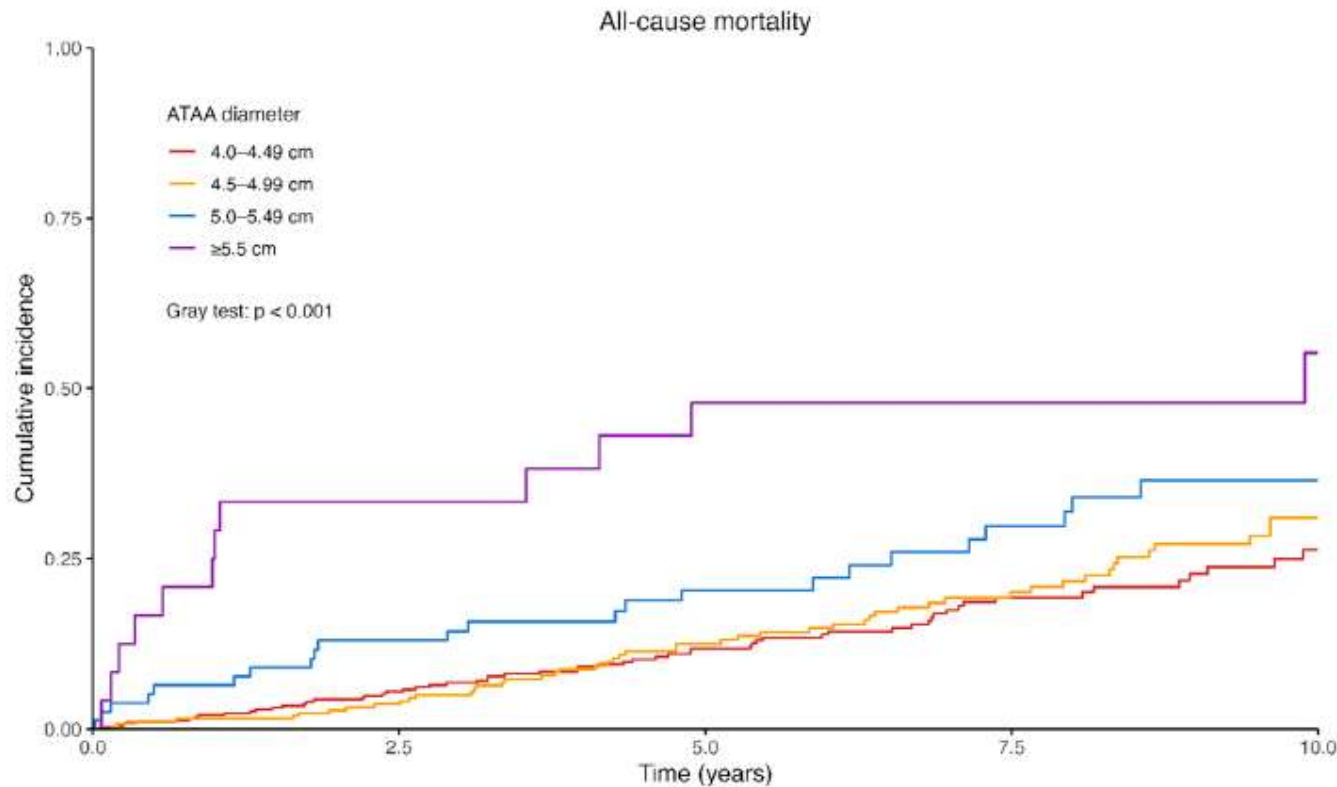


- ≥4.0cm 1998-2024
- N=764, 98% men
- Age 75 (9.3)
- BAV 7.9%
- No HTAD
- F/U 5.4 (6.2) yrs

UCSF Department of Surgery

Tseng et al JAHA 2026;15:e044959

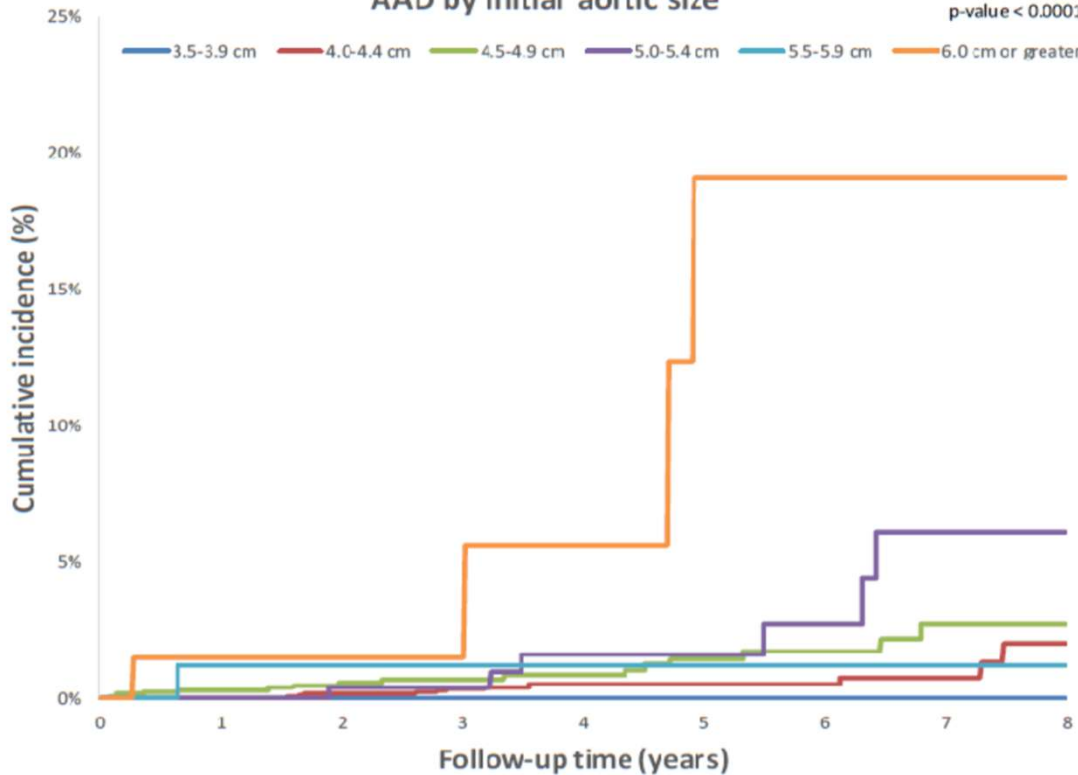
Validation: ATAA in VA Health System



- All cause mortality significant increase at ≥ 5.5 cm

Validation: Kaiser Permanente-TAA Study

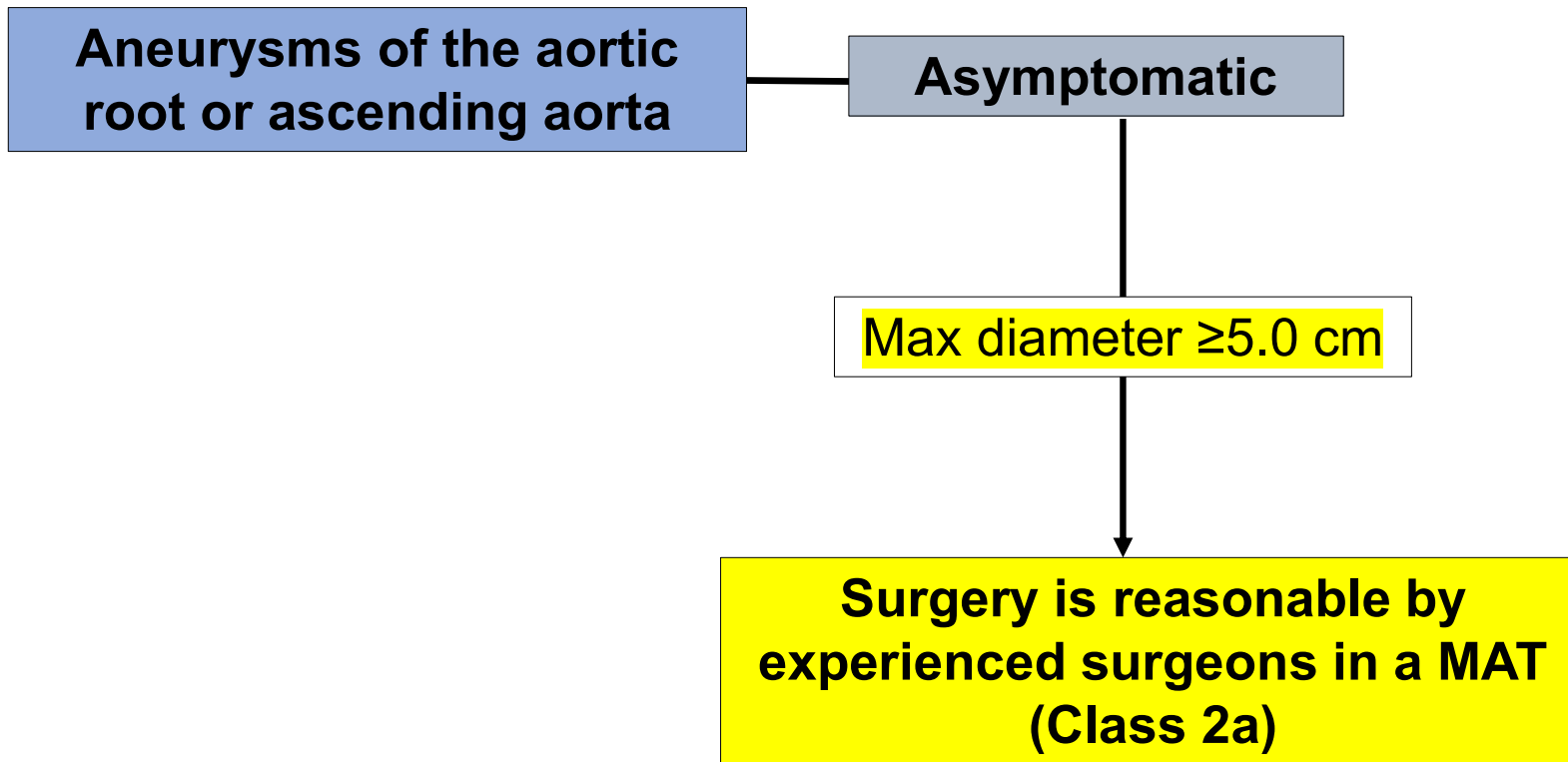
AAD by initial aortic size p-value < 0.0001



Patients at risk	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.5-3.9 cm	726	630	503	400	304	219	155	76	43
4.0-4.4 cm	3120	2604	1954	1416	990	681	454	222	96
4.5-4.9 cm	1698	1312	996	782	566	400	285	164	95
5.0-5.4 cm	548	323	239	186	136	104	70	40	26
5.5-5.9 cm	156	76	54	40	31	25	22	12	7
6.0 cm or greater	124	45	33	24	16	12	8	4	1

- N=6372 2000-2016
- 32% women
- ≥ 3.5cm
- F/U 3.7 yrs
- BAV 11%, no HTAD
- Age 68.6 (13)
- Age at AD 75 (64-81) yrs
- No AD <4.0cm
- Hinge point 6cm for AD and AD + all-cause mortality

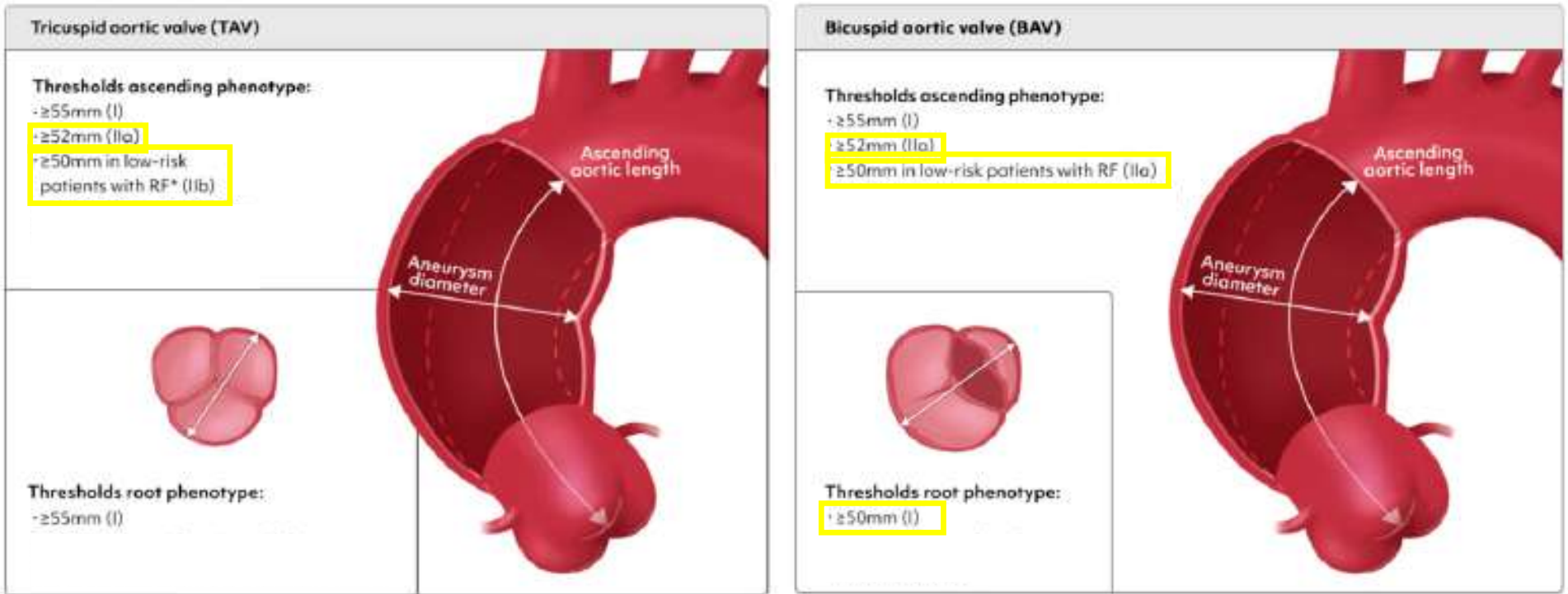
AHA/ACC Guidelines: Surgery for Sporadic Aneurysms of Aortic Root and Ascending Aorta



MAT, multidisciplinary aortic team; max, maximal; pt, patient; SD, standard deviation;

EACTS/STS Guidelines: Surgery for Root and Ascending Aortic Sporadic Aneurysms

Thresholds for Intervention in Aortic Root and Ascending Aortic Aneurysm



*Risk factors (RF)



Length of ascending aorta ≥11cm



>3mm diameter increase per year



Height <1.69m



Age <50 years old

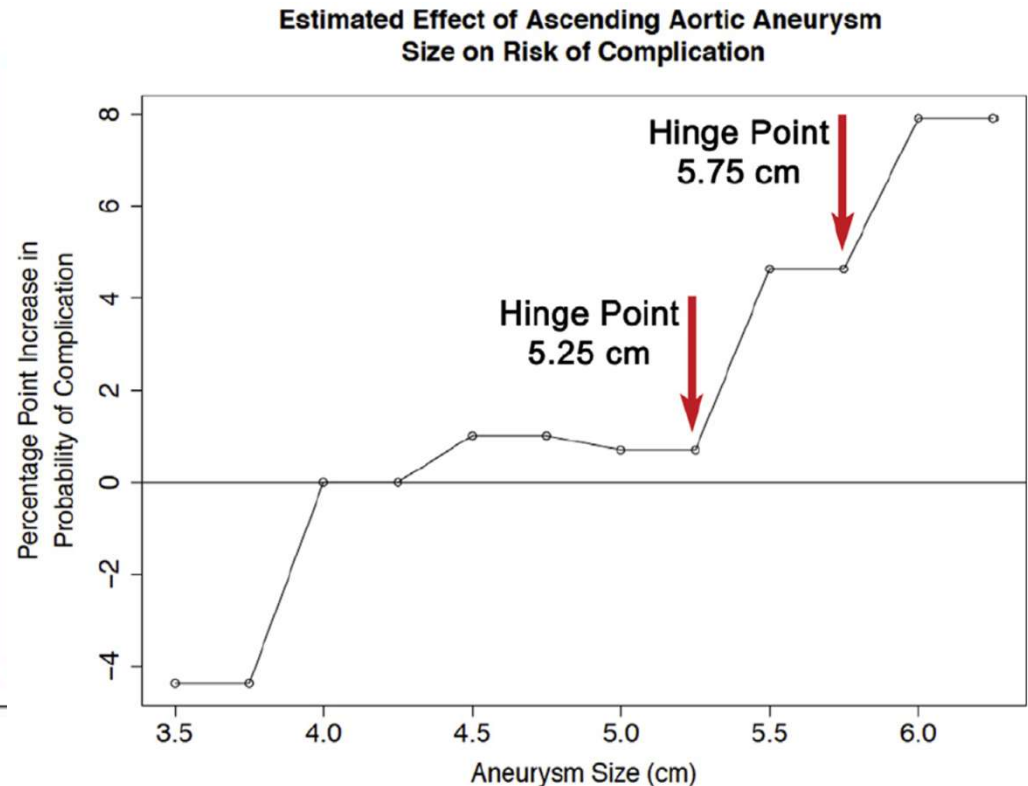
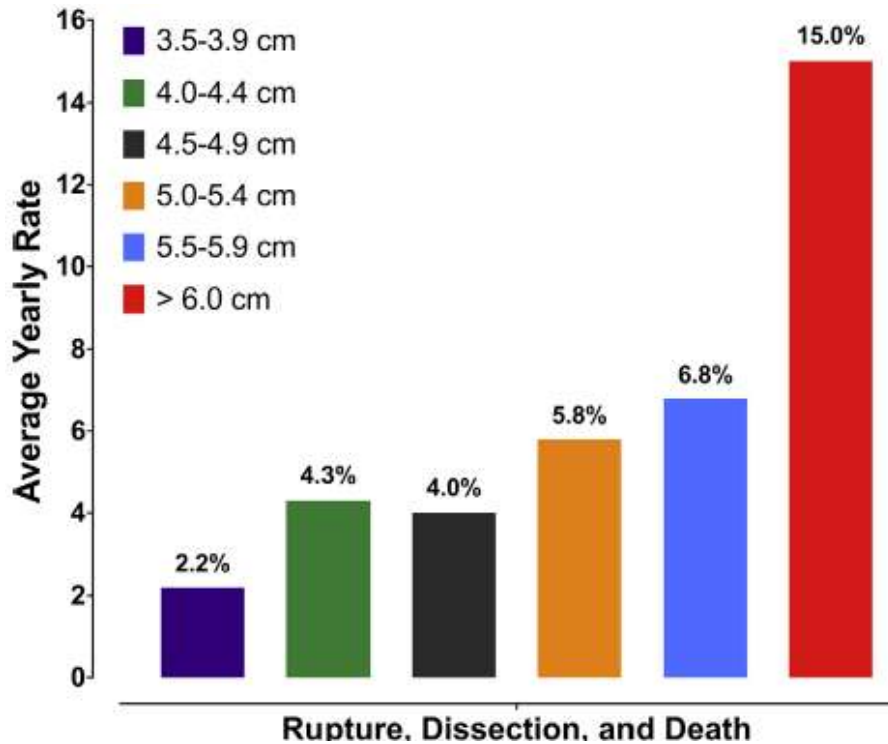


Arterial hypertension



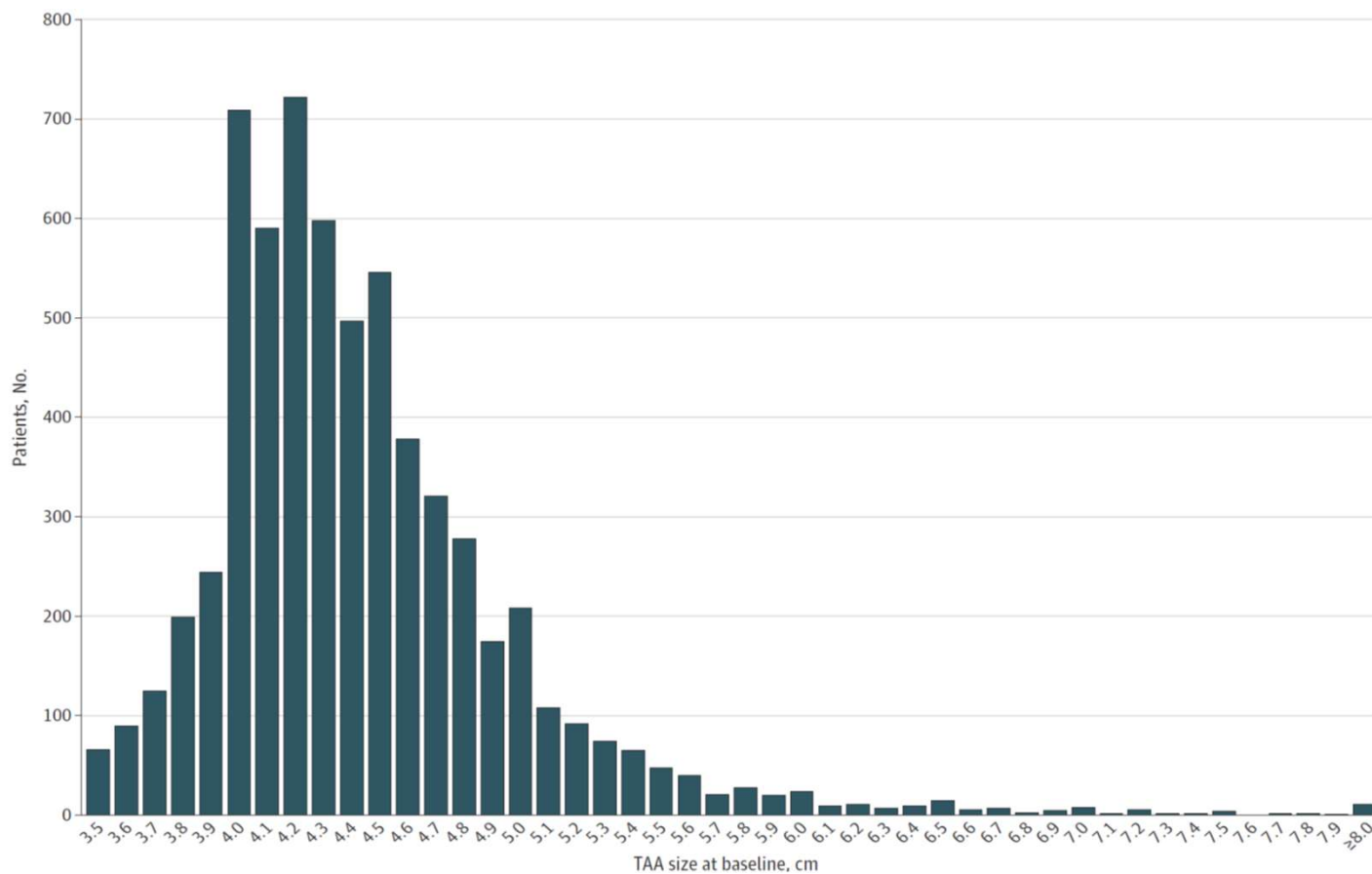
Department of Surgery

Guideline Data: 52.5mm Hinge Point



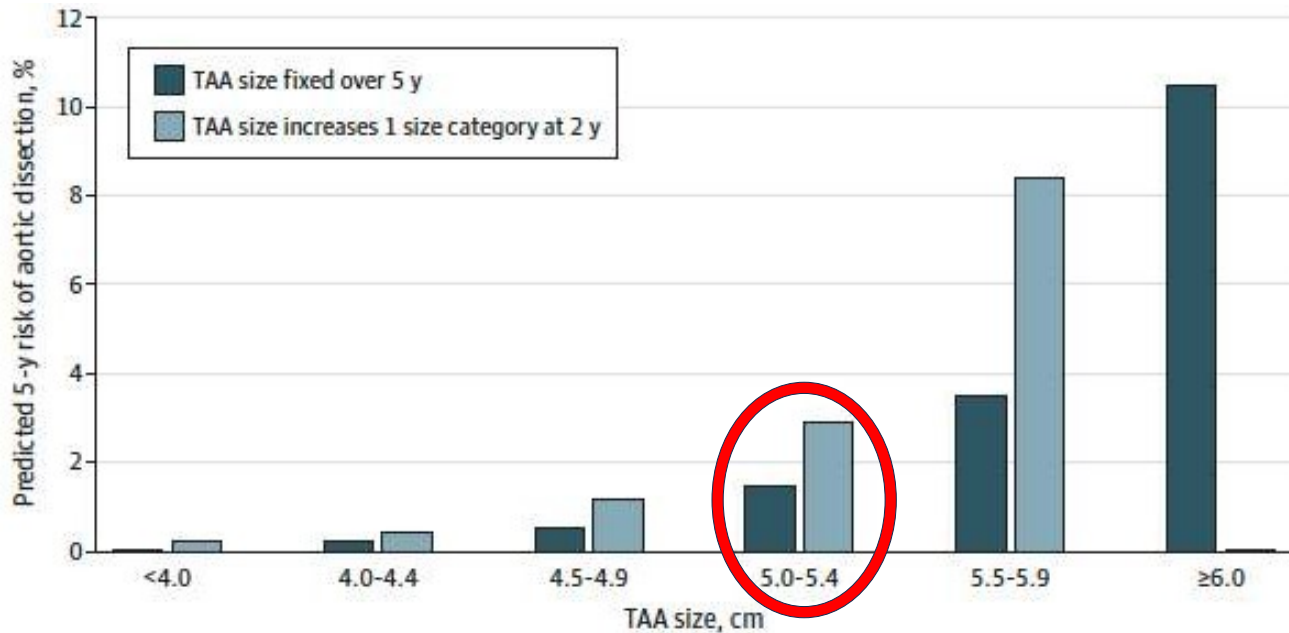
- 780 aTAA pts (1272 size measurements), mean f/u 48mo
- First hinge point 5.25cm, second 5.75cm
- Includes HTAD and family hx

Kaiser-Permanente-TAA Study



- 6372 aTAA pts from 2000-2016
- TAA ≥ 3.5 cm, >18 yrs, no aortic surgery or dissection, no genetic aortic disease
- 32% women
- Mean age 68.6 (13)
- Mean TAA size at dx: 4.3cm
- Mean f/u 3.7 yrs
- BAV 11%

5-Year Predicted Risk of Dissection from Size & Growth



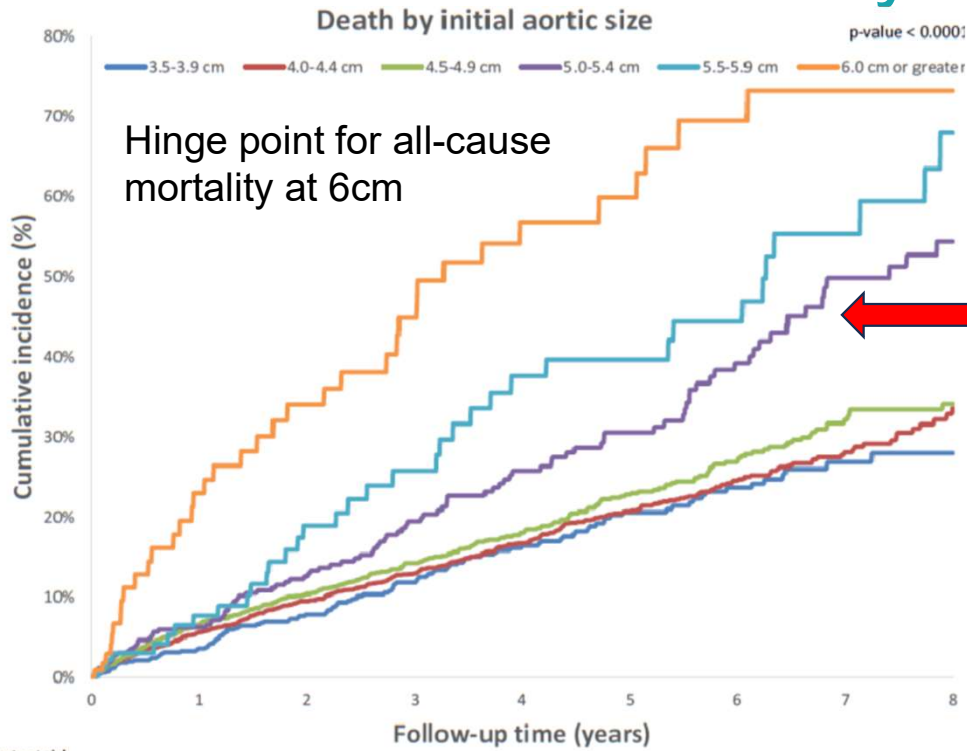
- Aortic dissection 44pts 0.7%
 - Only 1 BAV (1/747pts)
 - 27 Ascending, 13 Root, 4 Arch
 - 37 dissection, 3 IMH, 4 rupture
- Incidence 0.22/100pt-yrs
- Median age at AD 75yrs (64-81yrs)
- No AD <4.0cm
- Dissection rates:
 - >4cm <6cm <0.5/100pt-yr, <1%/yr
 - ≥6cm 2.19/100pt-yr
- Hinge point 6cm for AD and AD + all-cause mortality

Predicted risk AD in 5yrs:

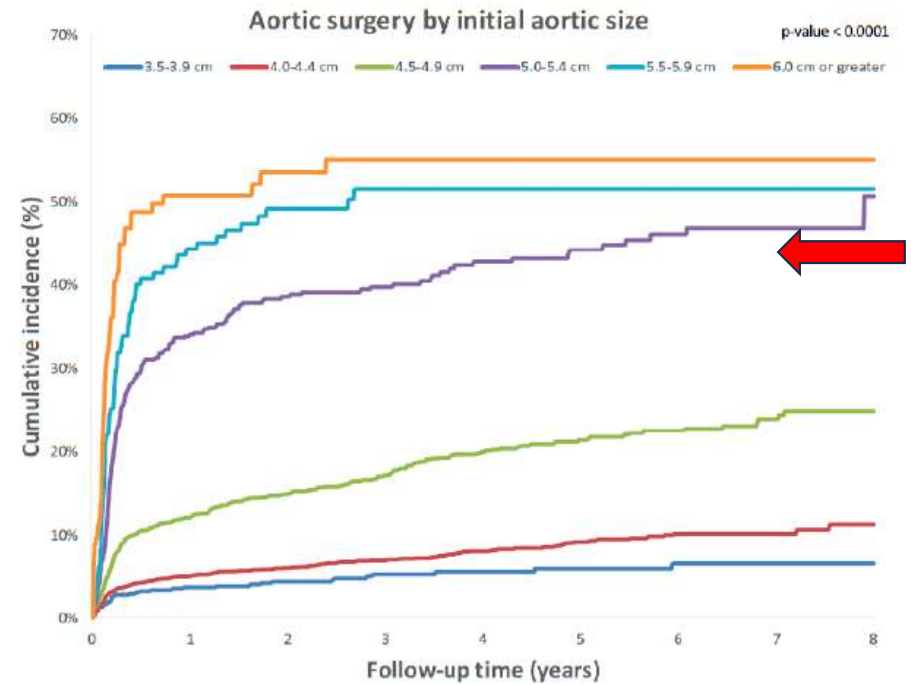
- 4-4.4cm 0.3% (CI 0.3-0.7)
- 4.5-4.9cm 0.6% (0.4-1.3)
- 5.0-5.4cm 1.5% (1.2-3.9)
- 5.5-5.9cm 3.6% (1.2-12.8)
- ≥6cm 10.5% (2.7-44.3)

Solomon JAMA Card 2022;7(11):1160-9

KP-TAA All-Cause Mortality and Elective Aortic Surgery



Patients at risk	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.5-3.9 cm	726	630	503	400	304	219	155	76	43
4.0-4.4 cm	3120	2605	1956	1418	992	683	455	223	96
4.5-4.9 cm	1698	1314	998	767	567	401	286	165	96
5.0-5.4 cm	548	323	239	186	136	104	70	40	26
5.5-5.9 cm	156	76	54	40	31	25	22	12	7
6.0 cm or greater	124	45	33	24	16	13	9	5	2



Patients at risk	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.5-3.9 cm	726	630	503	400	304	219	155	76	43
4.0-4.4 cm	3120	2604	1954	1416	990	681	454	222	96
4.5-4.9 cm	1698	1312	996	766	566	400	285	164	95
5.0-5.4 cm	548	323	239	186	136	104	70	40	26
5.5-5.9 cm	156	76	54	40	31	25	22	12	7
6.0 cm or greater	124	45	33	24	16	12	8	4	1

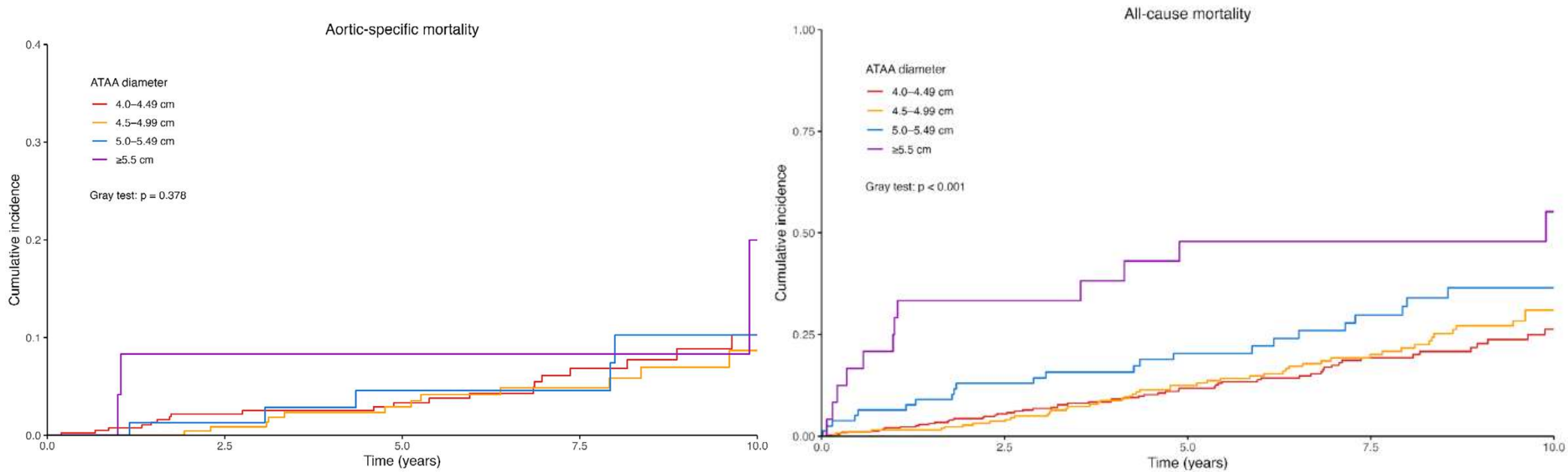
Unadjusted Outcomes

Table 2. Unadjusted Outcomes of Death, Aortic Dissection, and Aortic Surgery by Initial Thoracic Aortic Aneurysm (TAA) Size and Time-Updated TAA Size

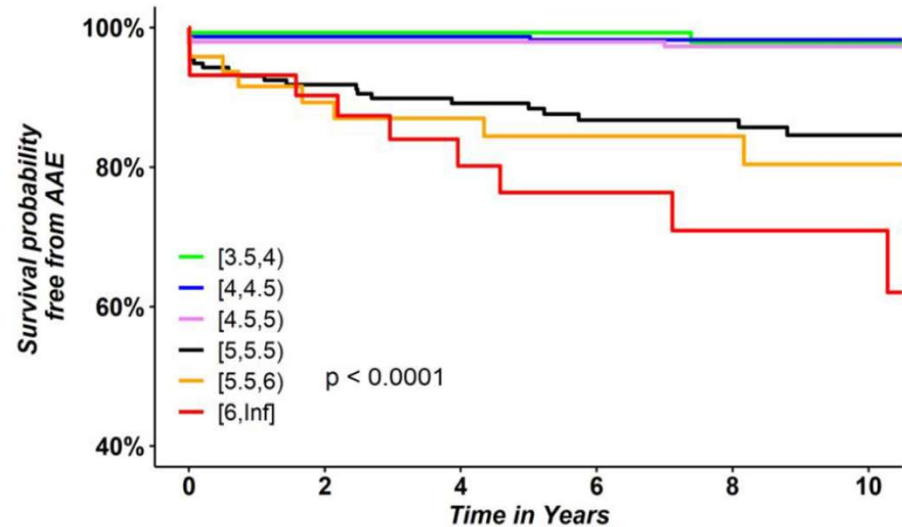
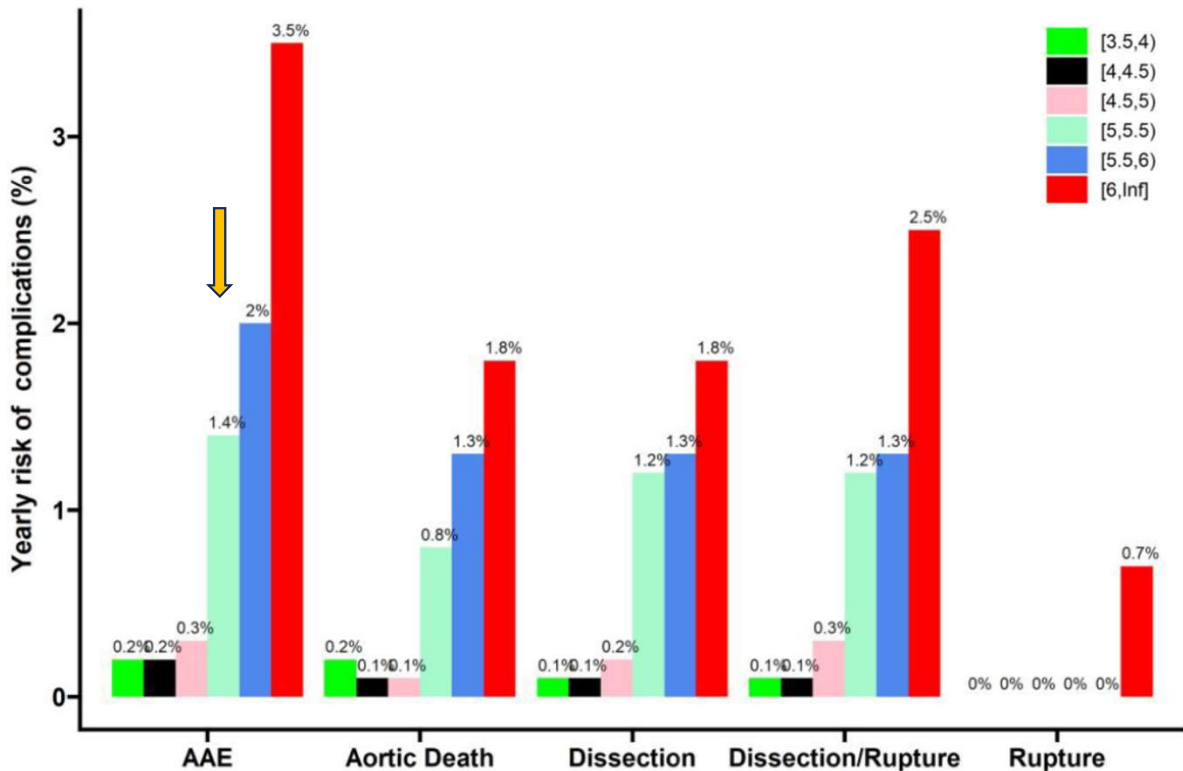
	No. (%)	Total event-free person-years, No.	Deaths, No. (%)	Aortic dissection or rupture, No. (%)	Aortic surgical procedures, No. (%)	Rate of aortic dissection per 100 person-years (95% CI) ^b	Rate of aortic dissection or all-cause death per 100 person-years (95% CI) ^b
Outcomes by initial TAA size, cm							
<4.0	726 (11.4)	2700	121 (16.7)	0	38 (5.2)	0.00 (0.00-0.00)	4.41 (3.68-5.28)
4.0-4.4	3120 (49.0)	10 005	514 (16.5)	15 (0.5)	237 (7.6)	0.15 (0.09-0.25)	4.96 (4.54-5.42)
4.5-4.9	1698 (26.7)	5436	324 (19.1)	18 (1.1)	313 (18.4)	0.33 (0.21-0.53)	5.63 (5.04-6.30)
5.0-5.4	548 (8.6)	1380	136 (24.6)	6 (1.1)	225 (41.1)	0.43 (0.20-0.97)	8.48 (7.07-10.16)
5.5-5.9	156 (2.5)	334	40 (25.6)	1 (0.6)	78 (50.0)	0.30 (0.04-2.12)	11.06 (8.01-15.27)
≥6.0	124 (2.0)	182	47 (37.9)	4 (3.2)	64 (51.6)	2.19 (0.82-5.84)	21.36 (15.61-29.24)
Outcomes by time-updated TAA size, cm^a							
<4.0	NA	3039	146	0	40	0.00 (0.00-0.00)	4.48 (3.78-5.30)
4.0-4.4	NA	9808	486	11	209	0.11 (0.06-0.20)	4.79 (4.38-5.25)
4.5-4.9	NA	5169	311	13	281	0.25 (0.15-0.43)	5.77 (5.15-6.46)
5.0-5.4	NA	1479	130	8	249	0.54 (0.27-1.08)	7.78 (6.48-9.34)
5.5-5.9	NA	348	47	4	97	1.15 (0.43-3.06)	12.62 (9.39-16.96)
≥6.0	NA	194	62	8	79	4.11 (2.05-8.21)	27.21 (20.79-35.62)

SFVA ATAA Aortic and All-Cause Mortality

VA Health System



Yale Adverse Aortic Event Rates: 3 Decades



	0	2	4	6	8	10
[3.5,4]	141	118	105	83	60	48
[4,4.5]	307	275	247	193	157	117
[4.5,5]	247	229	200	164	128	105
[5,5.6]	177	142	126	100	86	65
[6,Inf]	48	39	35	27	21	13
[6,Inf]	44	31	21	15	10	8

- 964 unoperated aTAA pts, median f/u 7.9 yrs
- 54 (5.7%) AAE

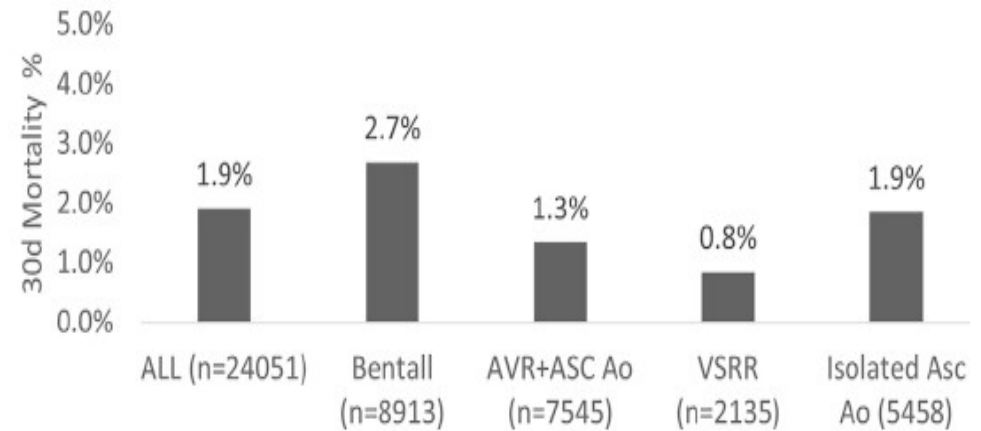
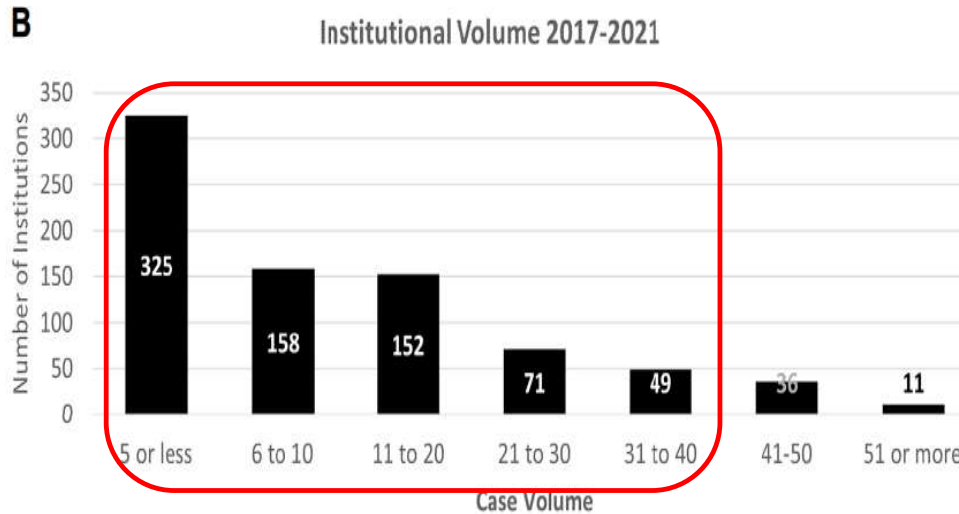
Surgery for Sporadic Aneurysms of Aortic Root and Ascending Aorta

AHA Guidelines Key Take-Away

The **goal** of prophylactic repair of aneurysms of the aortic root and ascending aorta is **to prevent life threatening complications** from acute aortic events such as aortic dissection, rupture, or sudden death.

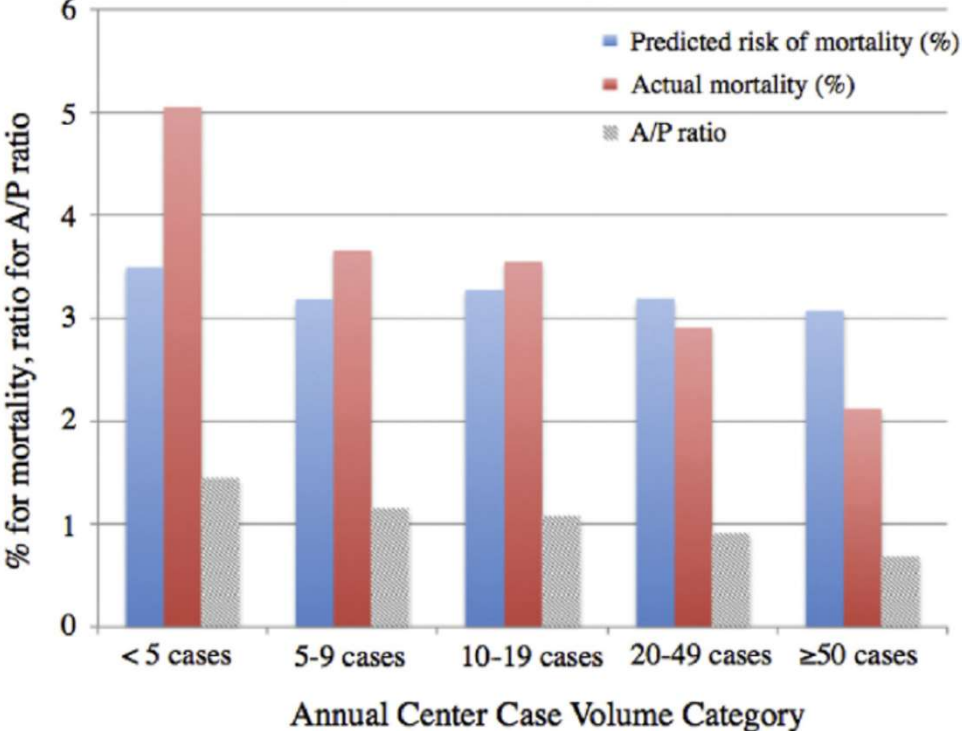
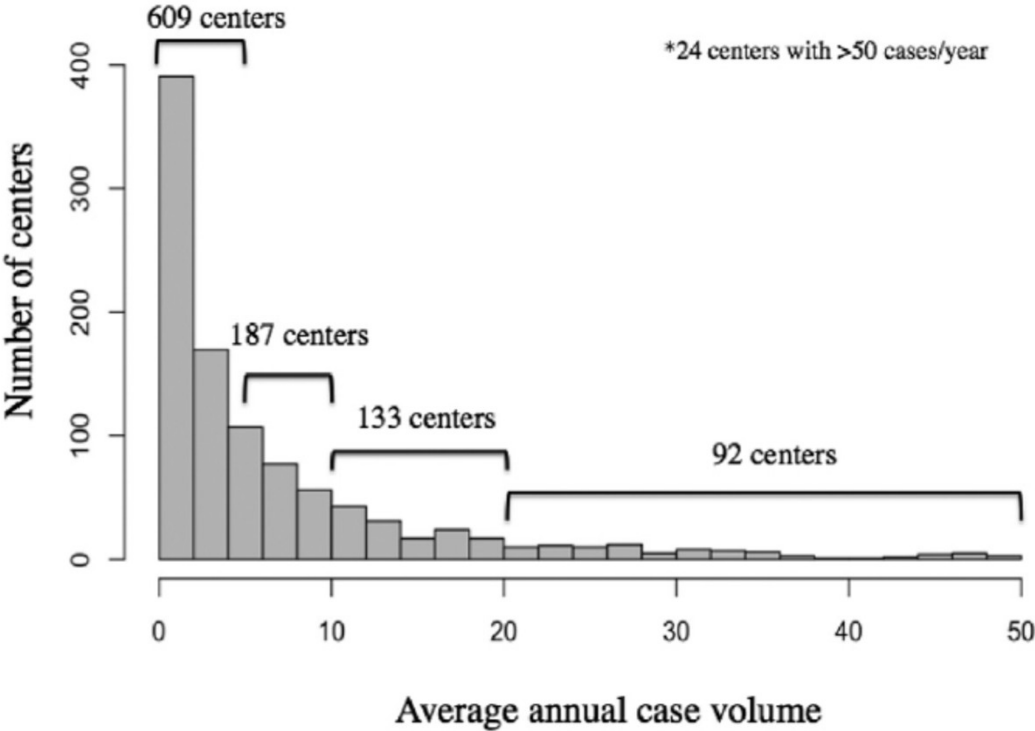
This goal is best achieved when the **risk** of future adverse aortic events is **greater than the expected surgical mortality** (considering both the surgeon's and institutional experience).

STS Aortic Surgery Mortality Risk Model

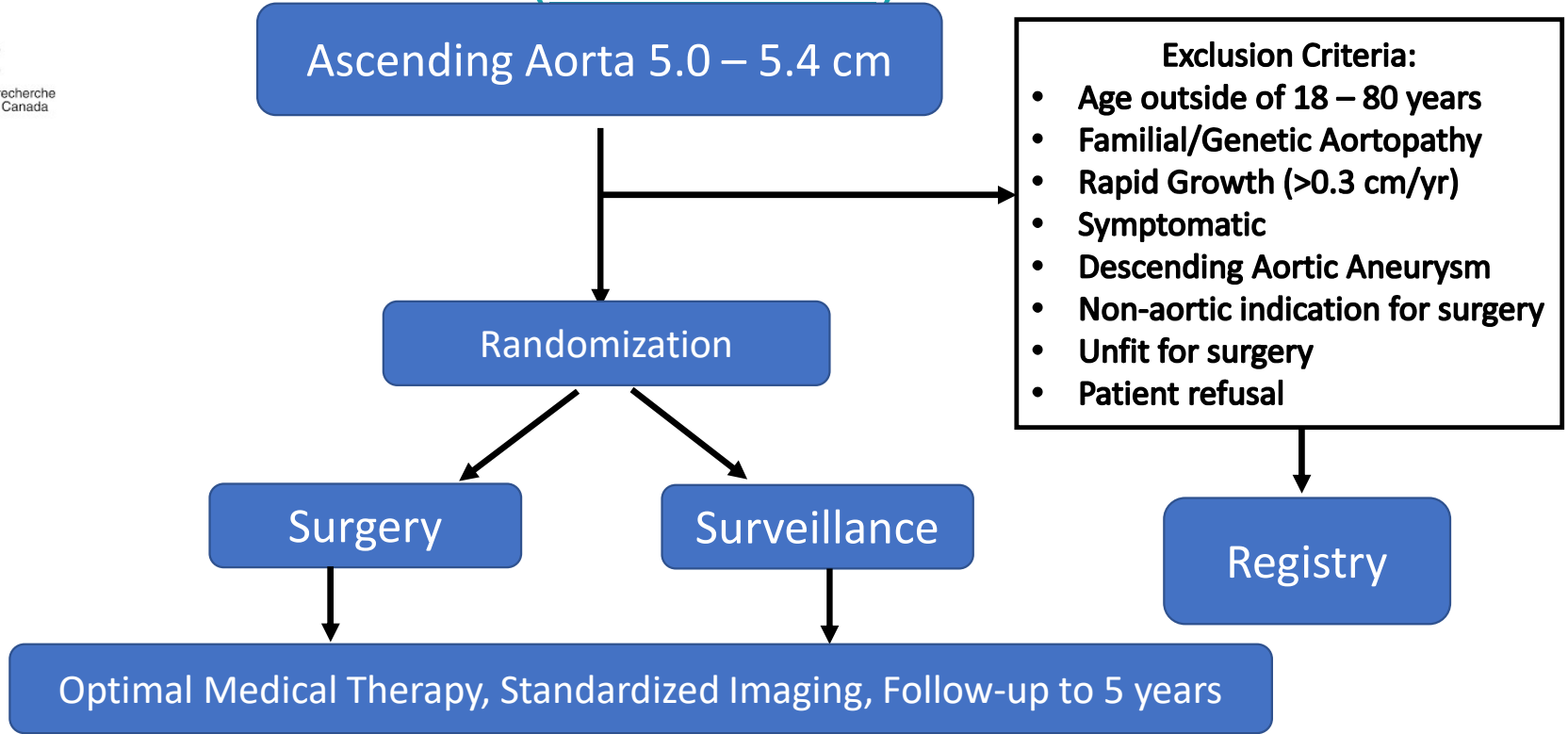


- 24051 nonemergent pts over 4 years at 905 hospitals, HCA 30.4%
- Only 47 hospitals did >10 cases per year
- 11 hospitals did ~12000 cases over 4 years, ~270 cases/yr each
- Overall aortic surgery mortality was 1.9%
- No volume-outcome relationship listed

STS: Data on Ascending Aneurysm Volume per Center to Outcome Relationship



Treatment In Thoracic Aortic aNeurysm: Surgery vs. Surveillance (TITAN:SvS)

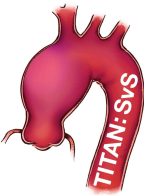


Primary Outcome: All cause mortality
Secondary Outcomes: Acute Aortic Syndrome, 30-day mortality, incidence of elective aortic surgery, stroke, aortic growth, QOL

Imaging Core Lab

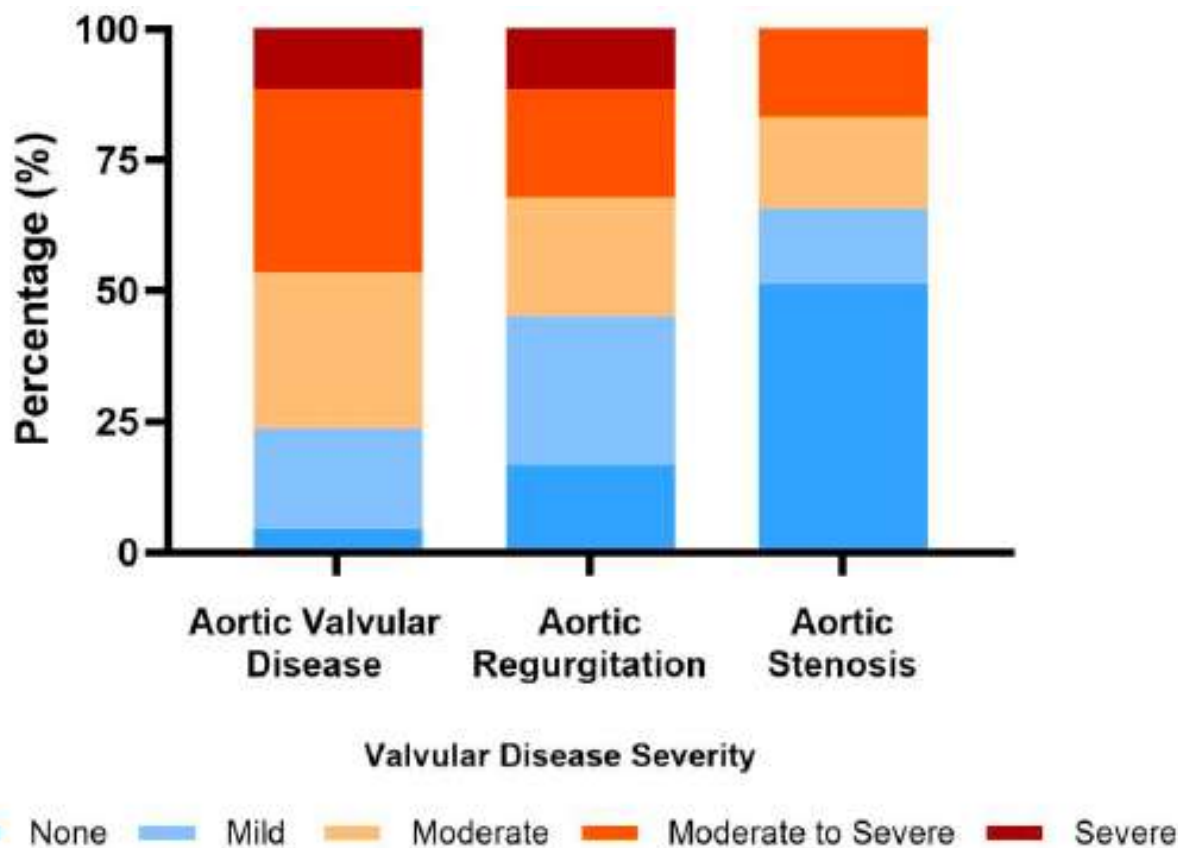
BioBank (Blood + Tissue)

UCSF Department of Surgery
Clinical Trials.gov [NCT03536312](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT03536312)



Unintended Impact of Left Shift

- TITAN 2021-2025



- 369 pts surgery
- Mean age 62 (11.7)
- Women 22%
- Size 50.2 (2.9) mm
 - 20% root phenotype
- SAVR 35.5% N=131
 - 11.5% severe AV dz
 - 24% no/mild AV dz
- Root replacement N=174
 - 33% SAVR
 - 90% not severe
 - 27% no/mild dz



Department of Surgery

Unintended Impact of Left Shift

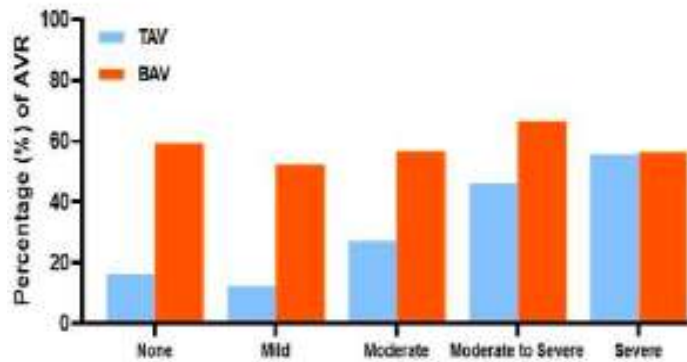
- Multivariate analysis for predictors of need for aortic valve replacement

Variable	Multivariable	p
\geq Mild Pre-operative Aortic Regurgitation	2.8 (1.7 – 4.7)	<0.01
\geq Mild Pre-operative Aortic Stenosis	34.2 (10.0 – 117.0)	<0.01
Bicuspid Aortic Valve	2.4 (1.4 – 4.1)	<0.01

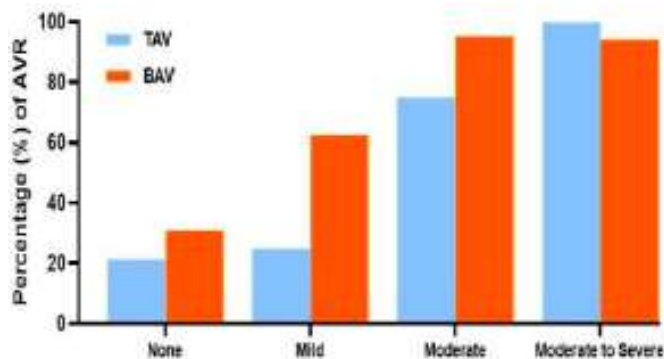
Unintended Impact of Left Shift

TITAN 2021-2025

A) Pre-operative Aortic Regurgitation



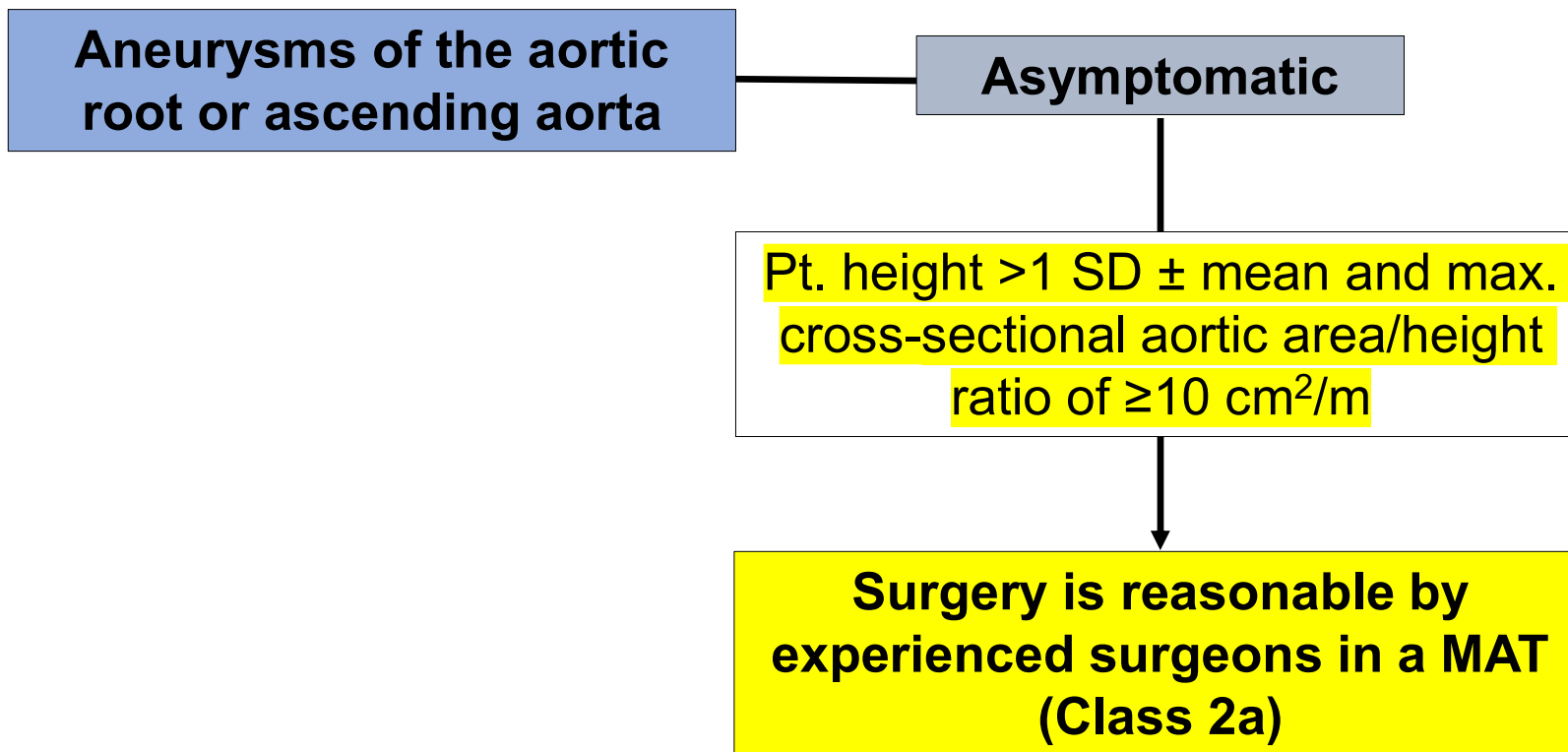
B) Pre-operative Aortic Stenosis



- 5-5.4cm ATAA pts undergoing surgery: 35% had SAVR where 25% had no/mild AV dz.

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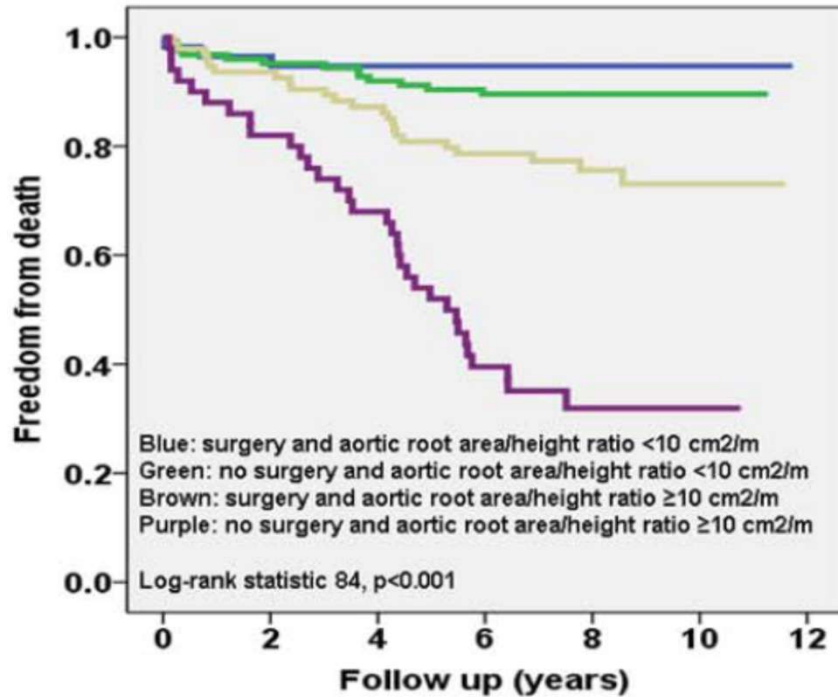
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MAT, multidisciplinary aortic team; max, maximal; pt, patient; SD, standard deviation;

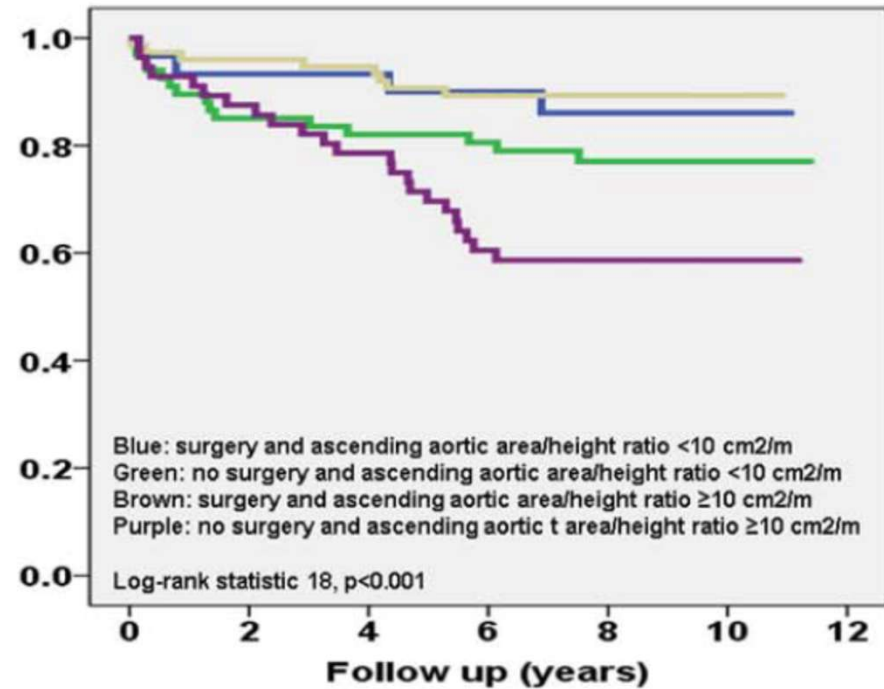
Area/height ratio of $\geq 10 \text{ cm}^2/\text{m}$ and All Cause Death

- Kaplan-Meier survival curves of aortic root and ascending aorta 4.5-5.5 cm



57	55	54	51	35	14	0
126	119	115	110	70	17	0
94	88	82	67	39	11	0
50	41	34	19	9	1	0

Numbers at risk



30	29	27	22	18	6	0
68	63	62	62	45	7	0
75	65	62	53	26	10	0
56	49	47	40	21	3	0

UCSF Numbers at risk of Surgery

- Masri et al. Circulation 2016;134:1724-37

Validation: SFVA Area/Ht and Mortality

Multivariate Analyses

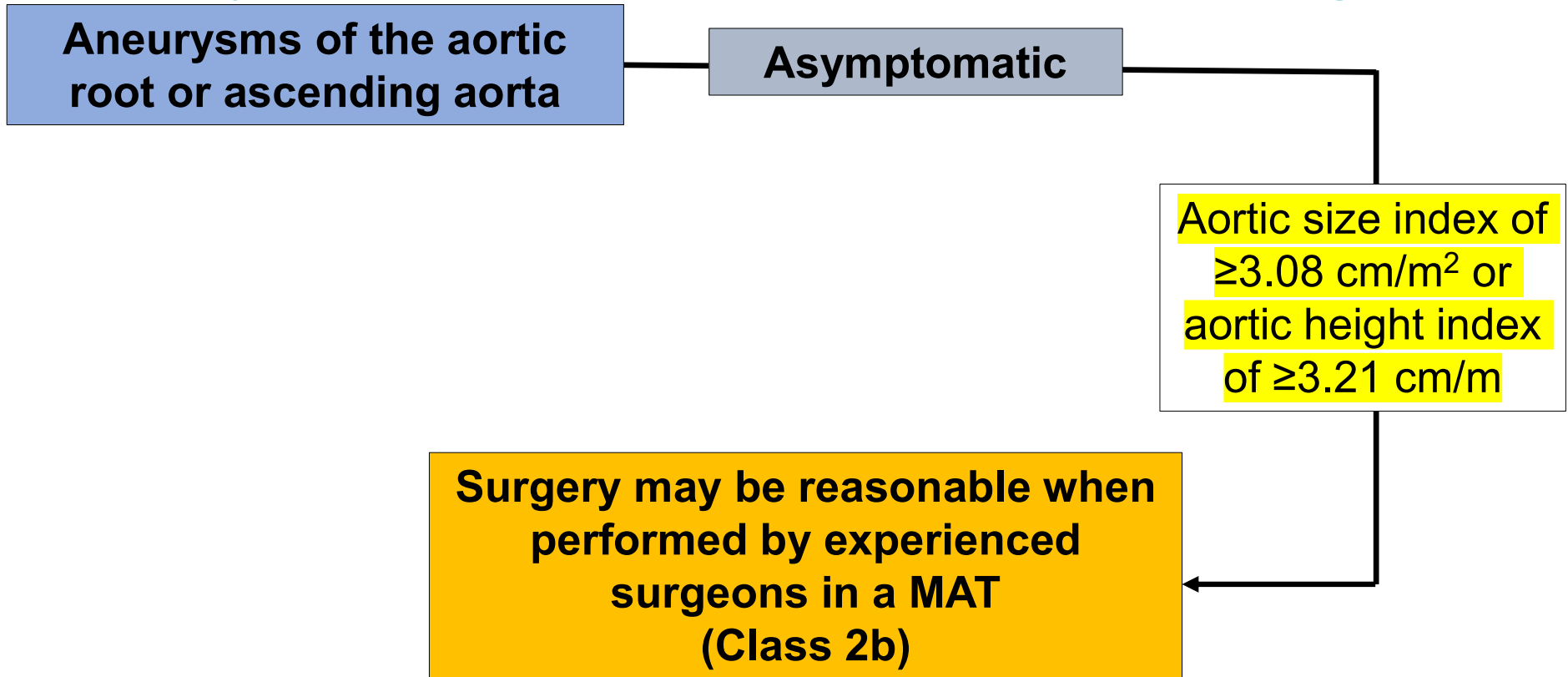
Aortic-related death	P	Odds Ratio	95% conf. interval
A:H	0.004	1.21	1.07- 1.39
age	0.002	1.08	1.03- 1.13
BMI	0.49	1.02	0.96- 1.09
smoker	0.11	2.03	0.89- 5.20
valve disease	0.42	0.73	0.33- 1.53

All-cause death	p	Odds Ratio	95% conf. interval
A:H	0.156	1.05	0.98- 1.13
age	<0.001	1.11	1.08- 1.14
BMI	0.55	0.99	0.95- 1.03
smoker	0.22	1.36	0.84- 2.24
valve disease	0.70	1.09	0.70- 1.68

- N=645, ≥ 4 cm
- Age 75
- Area/Ht $\geq 10\text{cm}^2/\text{m}$
- Aortic-mortality, OR 2.06 (1.23-3.38) $p=0.005$
- All-cause mortality, OR 5.57 (2.58-11.76) $p<0.001$

• Tseng et al. in preparation

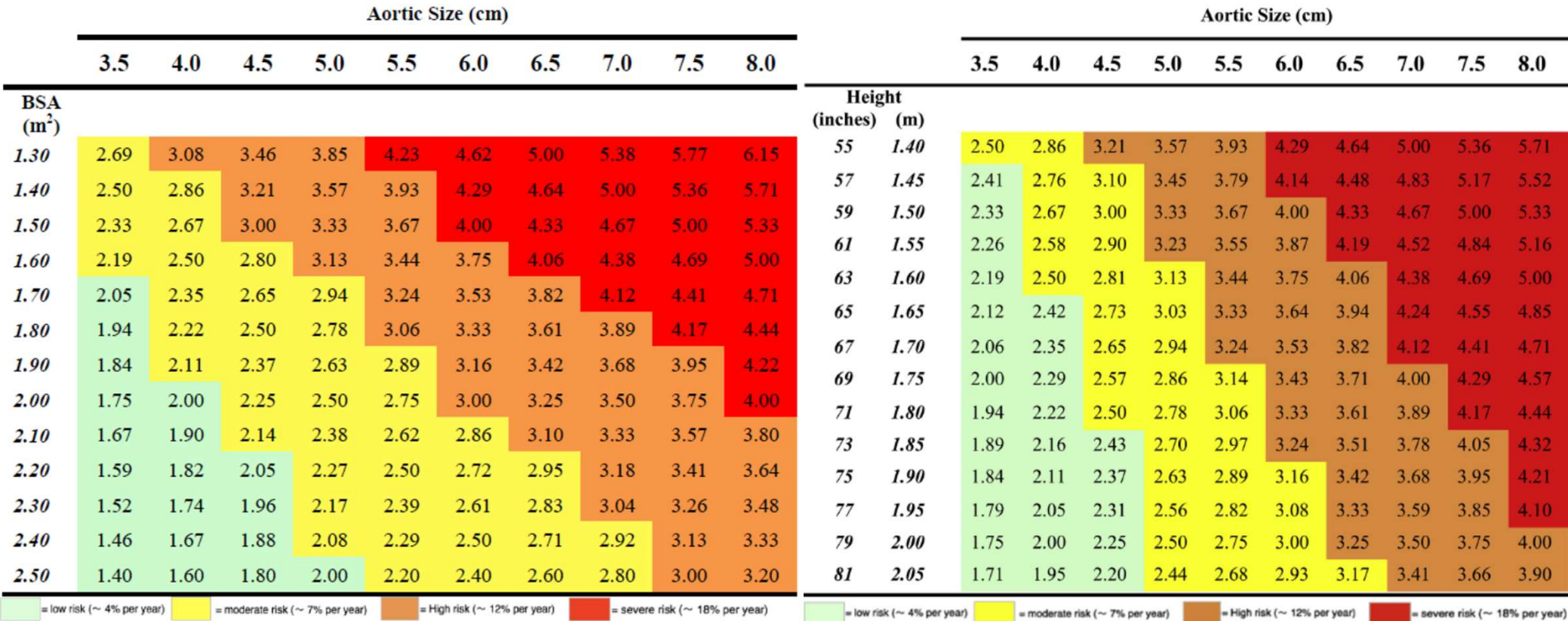
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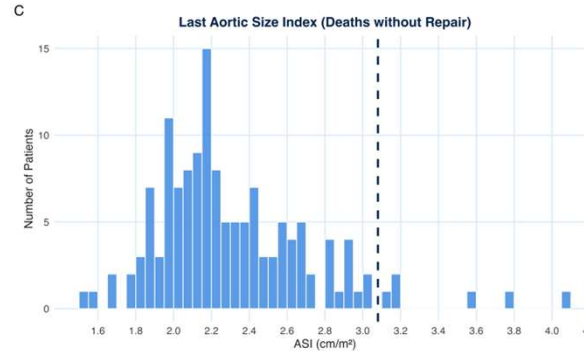
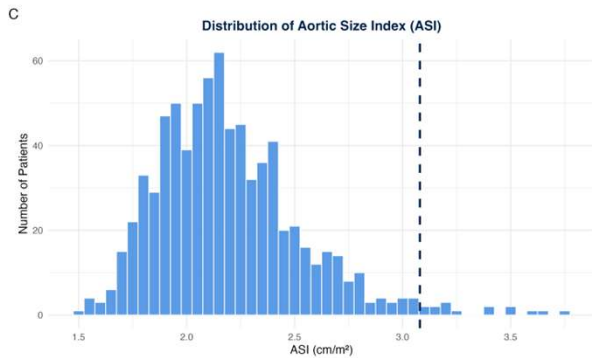
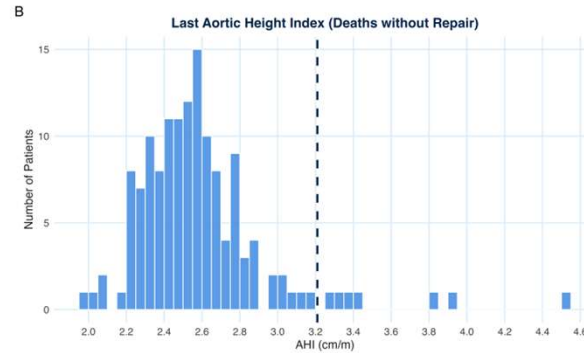
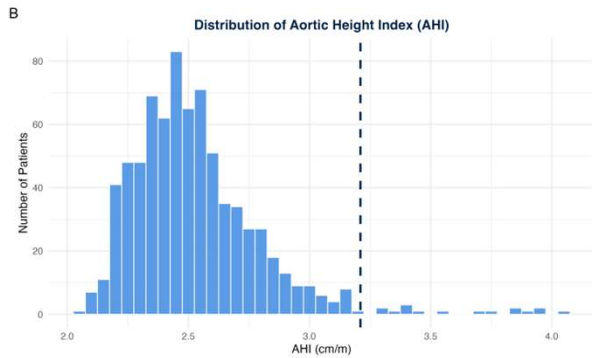
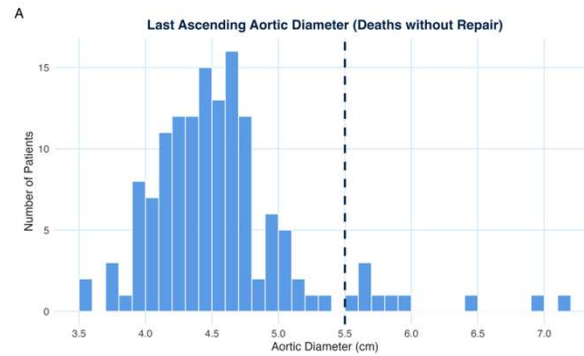
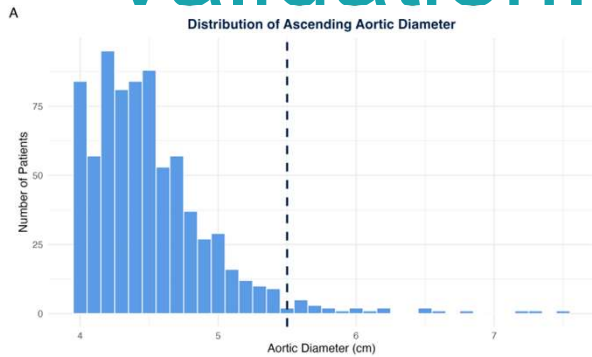
MAT, multidisciplinary aortic team; max, maximal; pt, patient; SD, standard deviation; and y, year.

Aortic Size or Height Index

- Yearly risk of rupture, dissection, and all-cause death

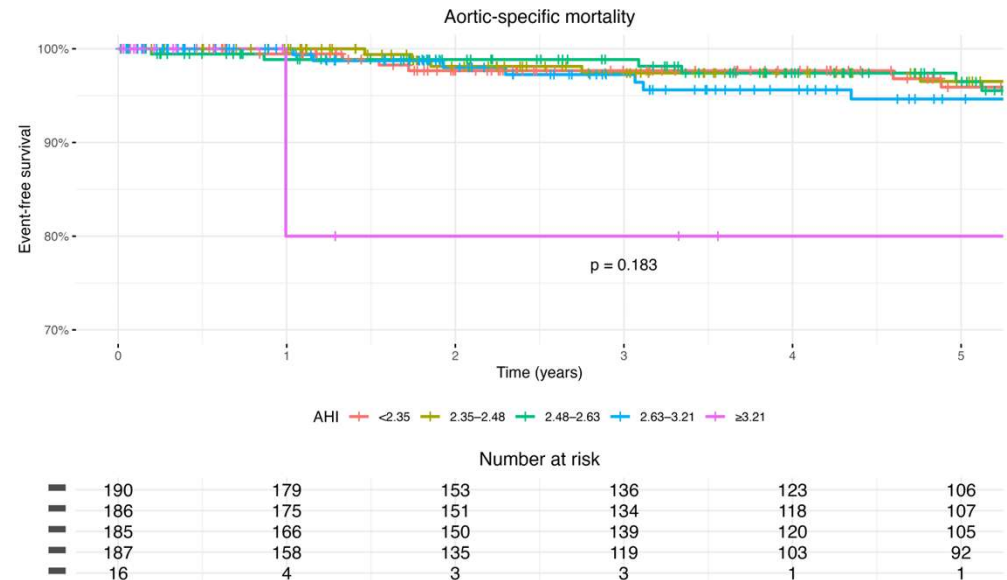
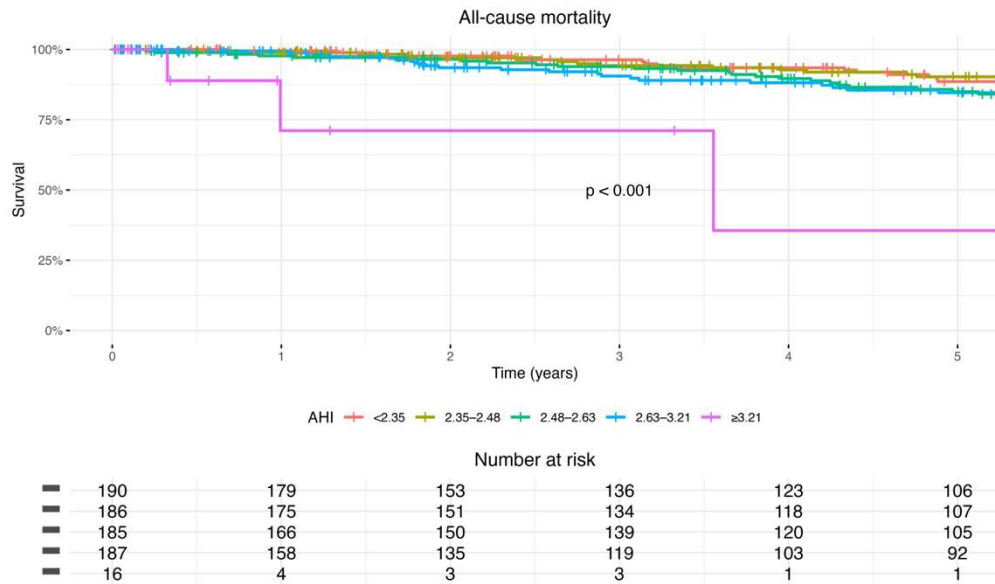


Validation: Aortic Size and Height Index



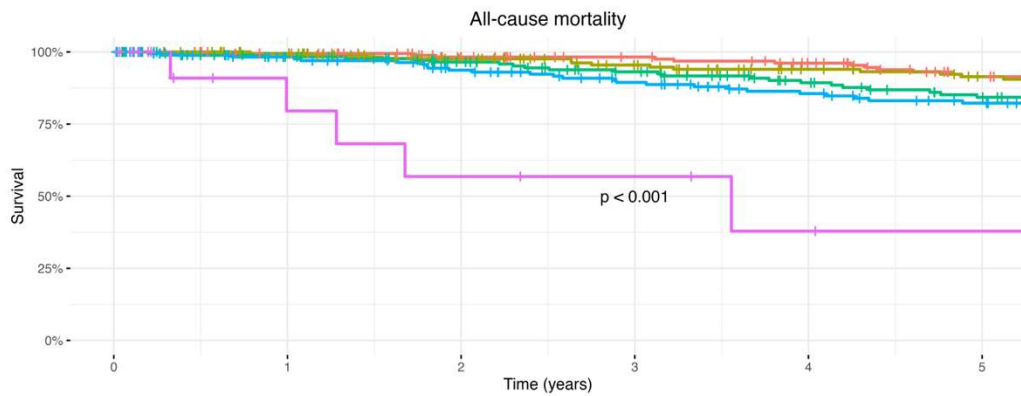
- N=764
- 98% men
- Age 76 (71-80)
- Size 4.4 (4.2-4.7) cm
- F/U 5.5 (2.3-8.5) yrs
- AHI 2.49 (2.35-2.64) cm/m
- ASI 2.15 (1.95-2.37) cm/m²

Validation: SFVA Aortic Height Index



- AHI ≥ 3.21 cm/m increased all-cause (4x) but not aortic mortality

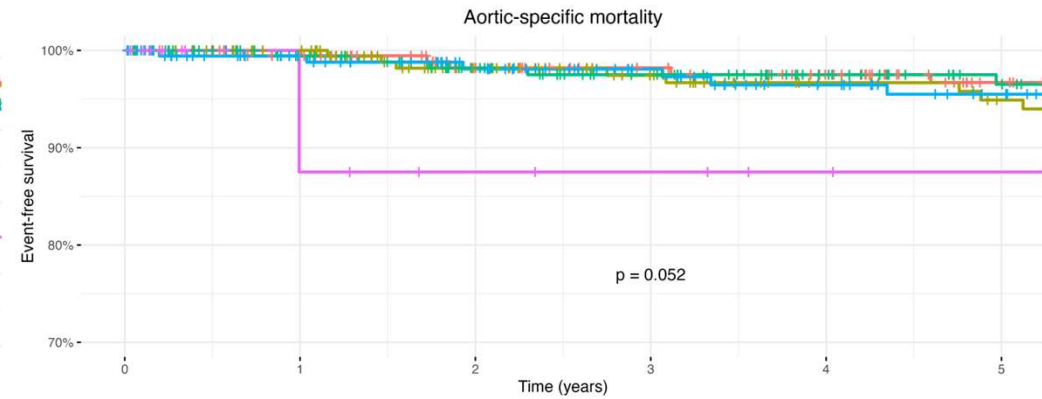
Validation: SFVA Aortic Size Index



ASI — <1.95 — 1.95-2.14 — 2.14-2.36 — 2.36-3.06 — ≥ 3.08

Number at risk

188	177	153	142	132	112
187	174	146	130	113	104
187	167	149	132	111	98
187	157	139	123	107	96
15	7	5	4	2	1



ASI — <1.95 — 1.95-2.14 — 2.14-2.36 — 2.36-3.06 — ≥ 3.08

Number at risk

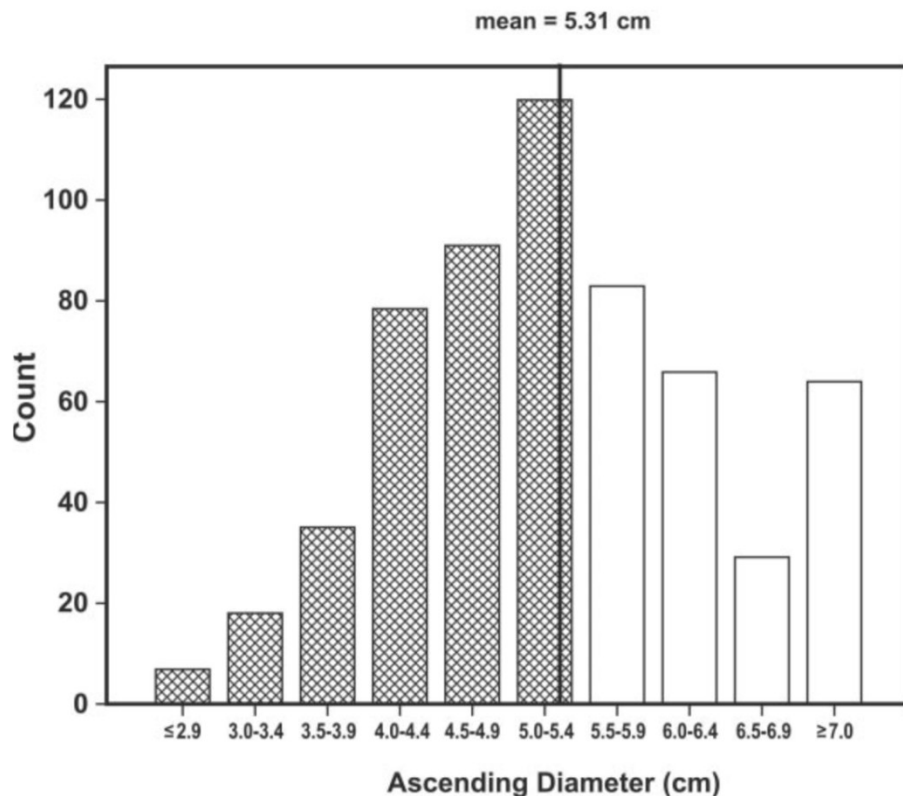
188	177	153	142	132	112
187	174	146	130	113	104
187	167	149	132	111	98
187	157	139	123	107	96
15	7	5	4	2	1

- ASI ≥ 3.08 cm/m² increased all-cause (8x) and trend towards significance aortic mortality

TAA Size Paradox: 5.5cm Not Good Predictor of Type A Dissection

Need Personalized Modeling

- International Registry of Acute Aortic Dissection (IRAD)



- Distribution of aortic size at time of type A presentation (total n=591)
- 59% of pts <5.5cm
- 40% of pts <5.0cm

TAA Size Paradox: Pre-Dissection Size

- How Does the Ascending Aorta Geometry Change When It Dissects?

- 6 centers 2 continents

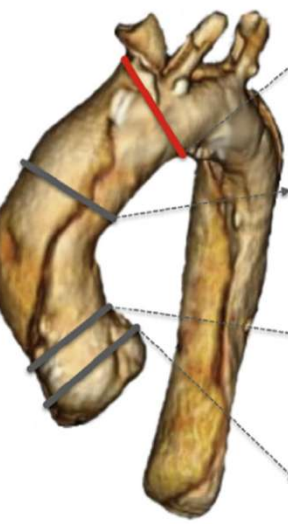
n=1821 type A dissection pts

CTA <2 yrs before and within 12 hrs after dissection onset

N=63 (27 spontaneous, 36 retrograde)

62/63 max asc diameter <5.5cm

Prior to AD largest diameter at mid-asc median 40.1mm (36.6, 45.3). Increased to 52.9 (46.1, 58.6)

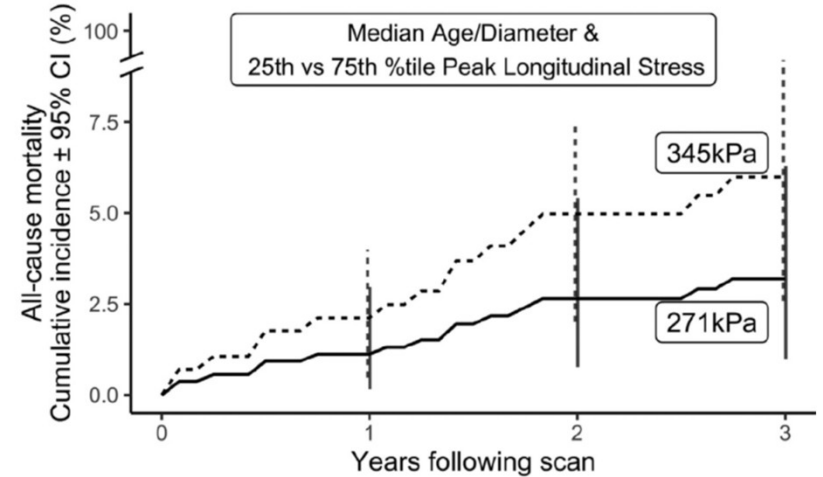
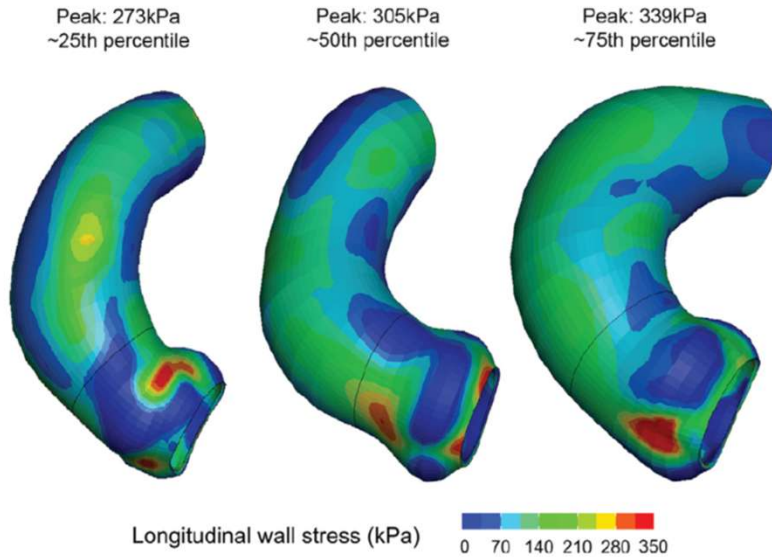


Pre-Dissection n=63	Diameter, mm Ellipticity index Area, mm ²	Post-Dissection n=63
39.8 (30.5, 42.6) 1.11 ± (1.08, 1.13) 1112.0 (959.8, 1329.3)	p<0.001, Δ +6.6 p=0.243, Δ +0.01 p<0.001, Δ +410	46.4 (42.0, 51.6) 1.12 (1.09, 1.17) 1522.0 (1255.0, 1847.8)
40.1 (36.6, 45.3) 1.09 (1.07, 1.12) 1159.0 (988.5, 1493.0)	p<0.001, Δ +12.8 p<0.001, Δ +0.05 p<0.001, Δ +711	52.9 (46.1, 58.6) 1.14 (1.09, 1.16) 1870.0 (1511.3, 2435.5)
37.2 (34.8, 40.8) 1.16 (1.13, 1.21) 953.0 (823.5, 1144.5)	p<0.001, Δ +6.9 p=0.257, Δ -0.01 p<0.001, Δ +499	44.1 (38.4, 50.3) 1.15 (1.12, 1.21) 1452.0 (1122.5, 1846.5)
40.4 (37.4, 43.0) 1.18 (1.15, 1.23) 1100.5 (946.8, 1275.0)	p=0.284, Δ +1 p=0.938, Δ 0 p=0.075, Δ +93.5	41.4 (38.1, 44.9) 1.18 (1.15, 1.22) 1194.0 (1034.0, 1382.7)

- After dissection, 44% (28/63) ≥5.5cm and 60% (38/62) ≥5.0cm

Peak Personalized TAA Wall Stresses & 3-yr Mortality

- Peak Longitudinal Stresses Associated with 3-yr All-Cause Mortality



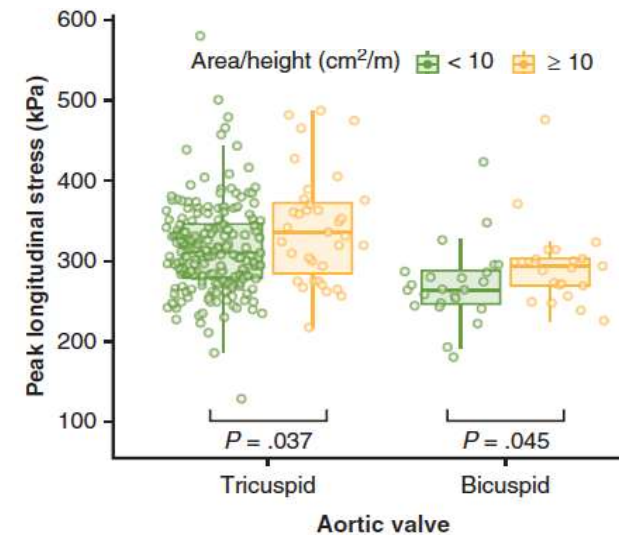
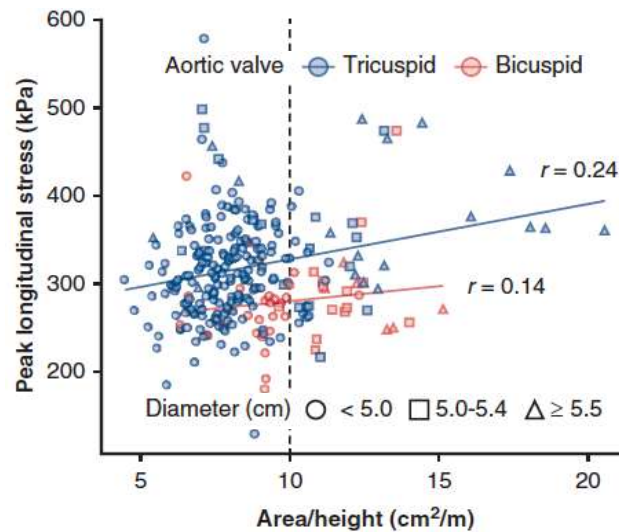
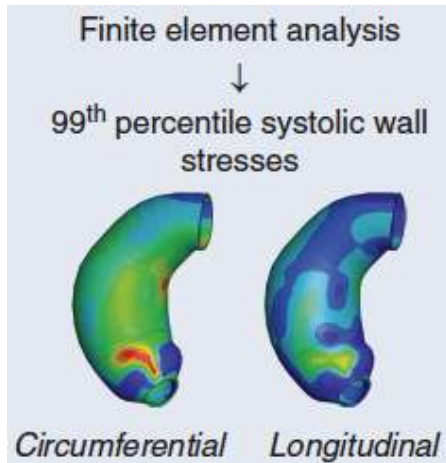
Number at risk	273	214	171	148
Cumulative repairs	-	51	52	53
Cumulative deaths	-	6	13	15

- N=273 veterans, 17% BAV
- Median diameter 4.5 (4.3, 4.9). 9% (25/273 pts) ≥ 5.5 cm
- Median f/u 3 yrs
- During f/u 19% (53/273) elective TAA repair with 0% mortality
- All-cause mortality 5.5% (15/273)

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Peak Wall Stresses vs Area/Ht $\geq 10\text{cm}^2/\text{m}$

- All-Cause Mortality

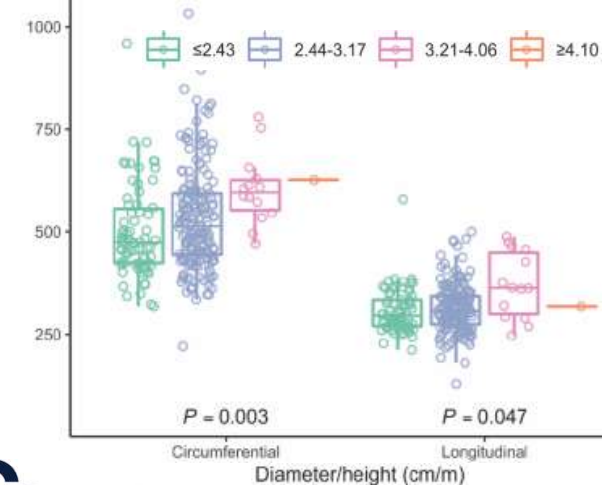
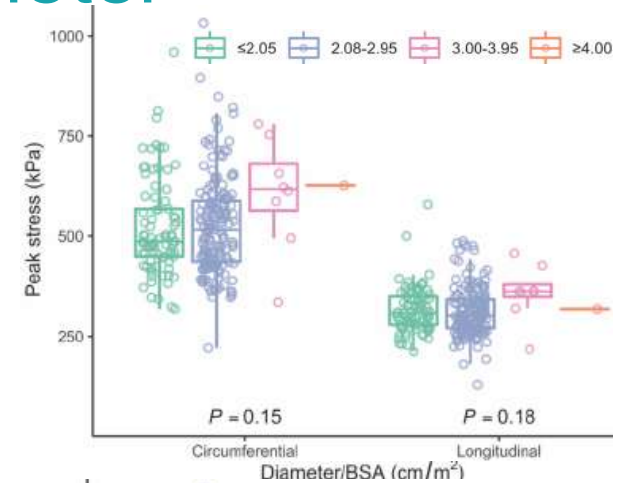
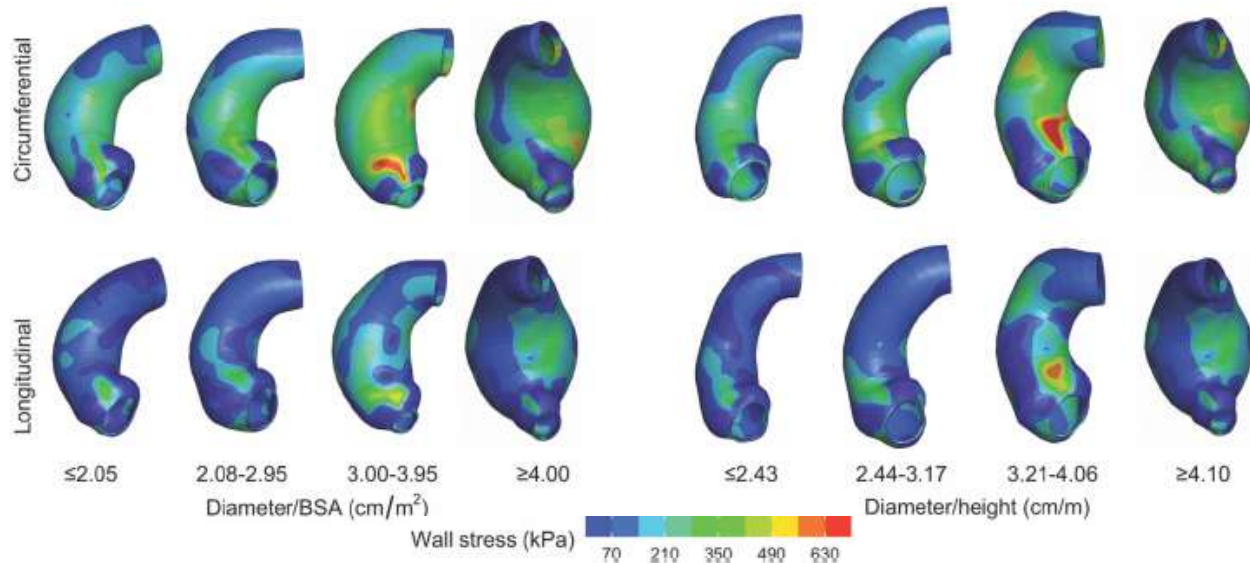


- N=270 pts: 46 BAV, 224 TAV
- A/H $\geq 10\text{cm}^2/\text{m}$: 68% 5.0-5.4cm, 83% $\geq 5.5\text{cm}$
- Peak long stress $\geq 355\text{kPa}$ independently associated with death, not Area/Ht

Adjusted Model	Hazard Ratio (95% CI)	P
Age per 9 years	2.20 (1.18-4.09)	.013
Area/height per 2.33 cm^2/m	1.12 (0.58-2.16)	.739
Peak long. stress per 73 kPa	1.78 (1.04-3.02)	.035

Peak Wall Stress vs Indexed Diameter

- All-Cause Mortality



- N=253 veterans, 98% male
- Median diameter 4.6cm
- Median Diameter/BSA 2.21 cm/m²
- Median Diameter/ht 2.57 cm/m

Peak Wall Stress vs Indexed Diameter

- All-Cause Mortality with ATAA repair as Competing Risk

Adjusted model 3

Age	1.91 (1.09–3.35)	0.04
Diameter/BSA	2.03 (1.10–3.74)	0.04
Peak longitudinal stress	1.81 (1.09–3.00)	0.04

Adjusted model 4

Age	2.13 (1.20–3.81)	0.04
Diameter/height	1.12 (0.63–1.99)	0.76
Peak longitudinal stress	1.78 (1.08–2.92)	0.04

- Indexed diameter added <2% of new pts for repair indication
- Peak longitudinal stress ≥ 354 kPa added 35% new pts for repair
- D/Ht not predictive of all-cause mortality, but D/BSA was predictive
- Peak long stress independently predictive of mortality

Conclusions

- Given the dissection size paradox, better predictors of dissection are required than the present diameter-based guidelines
- Peak longitudinal stress is predictor of all-cause mortality independent of diameter and diameter/BSA
- Personalized modeling and risk prediction holds the promise to tailor timing of prophylactic surgery for those aTAA patients at higher risk of dissection, rupture, or death.

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Thank you



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