

Reply to Letter to the Editor: "Rethinking Risk Stratification in Emergency Department Patients with Nonsustained Atrial Fibrillation"

To the Editor,

We sincerely appreciate the thoughtful comments and reflections provided in the letter titled "Rethinking Risk Stratification in Emergency Department Patients with Nonsustained Atrial Fibrillation"¹ regarding our recently published study.² We are encouraged by the recognition of our work's relevance to emergency care settings and its potential to inform clinical decision-making in patients presenting with brief episodes of atrial fibrillation (AF).

We fully agree with the authors that nonsustained AF (NS-AF), particularly episodes lasting less than 30 seconds, has traditionally been underestimated in terms of thromboembolic risk, especially in time-constrained environments such as emergency departments. The removal of the 30-second threshold in the 2024 ESC guidelines indeed aligns with our findings and supports a broader, more comprehensive understanding of AF risk burden.³

The emphasis placed by the authors of the letter on the high negative predictive value of a CHA₂DS₂-VA score <2 is particularly important. As they correctly highlight, our data show that patients with NS-AF and a CHA₂DS₂-VA score ≥2 are at substantially increased risk for ischemic stroke. This reinforces the role of early risk stratification in guiding follow-up and treatment planning, even when AF episodes are brief and paroxysmal in nature.

We also support the authors' call for further prospective validation in acute care cohorts. The integration of brief arrhythmic episodes into clinical algorithms remains a challenge, and more real-world data are needed to optimize safe and timely decision-making, particularly in resource limited settings.

Once again, we thank the authors for their insightful engagement with our study. We are pleased that our findings may help stimulate broader conversations on stroke prevention strategies and patient safety in AF management.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR REPLY

Ece Yurtseven¹

Dilek Ural¹

Kurtuluş Karaüzüm²

İrem Yılmaz²

Yengi Umut Çelikyurt²

Kaan Hancı²

Müjdat Aktaş²

Ümit Yaşar Sinan³

Serdar Küçükkoğlu³

Ayşen Ağaçdiken Ağır²

¹Department of Cardiology, Faculty of Medicine, Koç University, Istanbul, Türkiye
²Department of Cardiology, Faculty of Medicine, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, Türkiye

³Department of Cardiology, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Institute of Cardiology, Istanbul, Türkiye

Corresponding author:

Ece Yurtseven
✉ eyurtseven@ku.edu.tr

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