

Sotiris Antoniou<sup>1</sup>, John Papastergiou<sup>2</sup>, Fabio De Rango<sup>3</sup>, Dale Griffiths<sup>4</sup>, Nadya Hamed<sup>5</sup>, Helen Williams<sup>5</sup>, Maria Dolores Murillo<sup>6</sup>, Salvador Tous<sup>6</sup>, Trudie Lobban<sup>7</sup>, Filipa Alves da Costa<sup>8</sup> on behalf of the International Pharmacists for Anticoagulation Care Taskforce

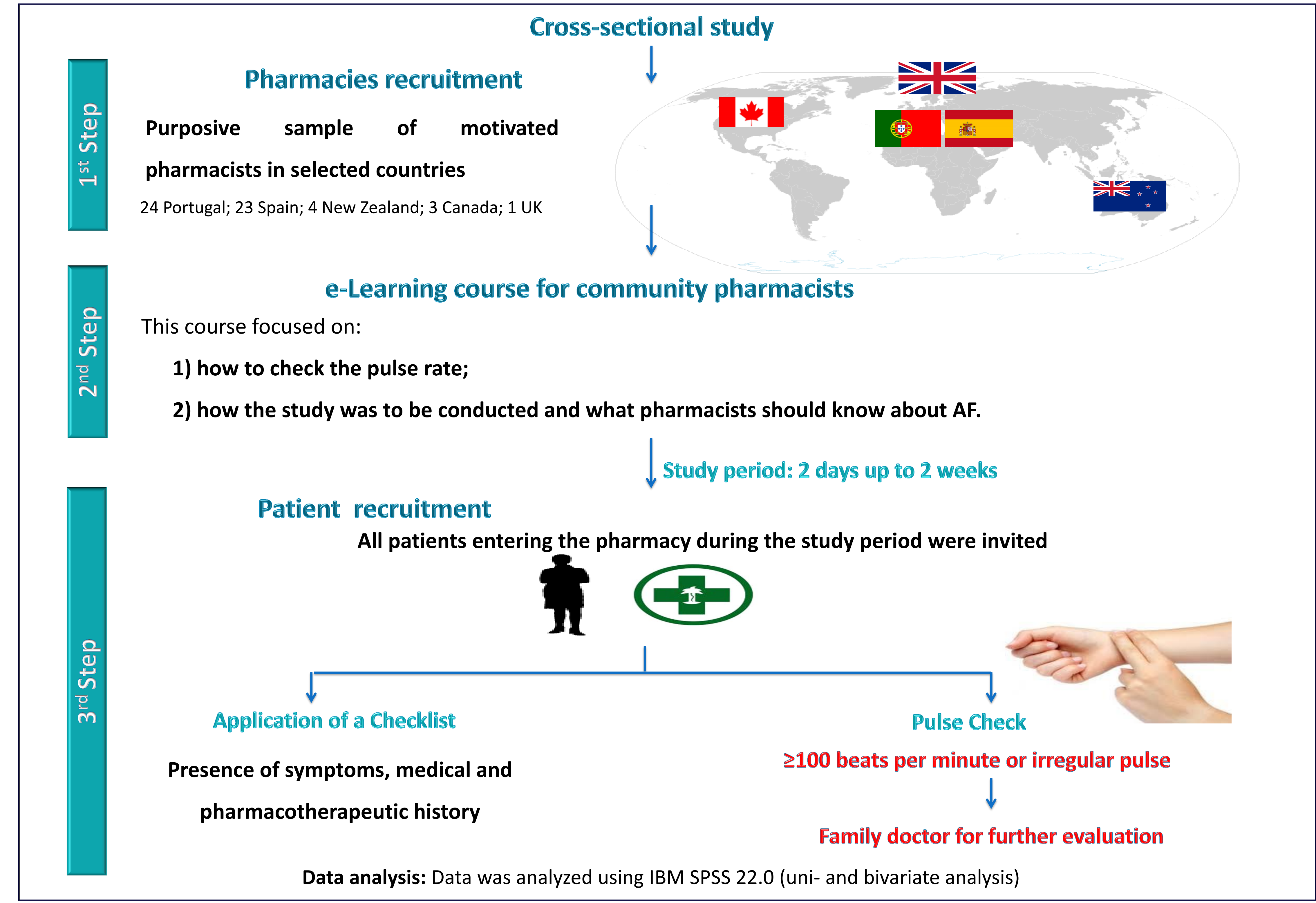
<sup>1</sup>Barts Heart Centre, Barts Health NHS Trust, London, United Kingdom; <sup>2</sup>University of Toronto, Center for Practice Excellence, Canada; <sup>3</sup>Shoppers Drug Mart, Pharmacy, Toronto, Canada; <sup>4</sup>Westview Pharmacy, Auckland, New Zealand; <sup>5</sup>Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group, London, United Kingdom; <sup>6</sup>Sociedad Española de Farmacia Familiar y Comunitaria SEFAC; <sup>7</sup> Arrhythmia Alliance/Atrial Fibrillation Association, United Kingdom; <sup>8</sup>CiEM – Centro de Investigação Interdisciplinar Egas Moniz, Portugal

## 1. Background and Objectives

Atrial fibrillation is the most common cardiac arrhythmia globally, responsible for one third of strokes, and often resulting in death or incapacity. This condition, frequently asymptomatic, is estimated to be up to 50% undiagnosed<sup>1</sup>. Reducing this risk with appropriate detection and management strategies offers substantial economic and patient benefits. The International Pharmacist for Anticoagulation Care Taskforce- [iPACT] created a partnership with the Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA) to test a model whereby pharmacists are actively involved in opportunistic screening for AF initially in all ages as a proof of concept.

**Purpose:** To assess the feasibility of pharmacists implementing pulse checks in community pharmacy to enable identification of new cases of AF and subsequent initiation of anticoagulation

## 2. Methods



## Contact Details

Sotiris Antoniou | Chair of iPACT, and Consultant Pharmacist, Cardiovascular, Barts Health NHS Trust, London, UK | sotiris.antoniou@ipact.org

## 3. Results

### Main results of this campaign

#### 1. Patients recruitment

**1717 individuals** were recruited from 56 pharmacies with an average age of 62.2 +/-15.5 years; median of 63 years, 793 (46.2%) were 65 years or older; and 1037 (60.4%) being female.

Individual country recruitment ranged from 58 to 868 with the average community pharmacy recruiting 30 people.



**Figure 1:**  
**A** – Community Pharmacist handing flyers with information on AF;  
**B** – Patient having his pulse taken by a Community Pharmacist

#### 2. Pulse Check and Patients referred

**77 individuals (4.5%)** were referred to the general practitioner following an **irregular pulse**. Twenty four (1.4%) had confirmed diagnosis within 30 day follow up with ten (0.6%) unconfirmed. All **24 confirmed cases** received anticoagulation in accordance with guideline recommendations.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

- ESC guidance recommends opportunistic screening for AF by pulse taking or ECG rhythm strip in patients >65 years of age<sup>2</sup> and this was the largest multi-country 'Know Your Pulse' campaign since the creation of the concept by AFA in 2008.
- Our data, albeit with a slightly lower age, is synonymous with meta-analyses identifying 1.4% of those aged 65 or older on a single time point check for presence of AF<sup>3</sup>.
- Community pharmacies are ideally located to support awareness campaigns and in the case of AF early detection.
- Asymptomatic AF is common, unfortunately, pulse taking is not commonly performed in general practice, and so an irregular pulse will go undetected.
- If every pharmacy worldwide screened 100 people, pharmacists could make a major contribution in addressing undiagnosed AF.

## References

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## Declarations of Interest

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