

## Effect of Siderosis in General and Oral Health Systematic Review and Meta analysis

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** MRI biomarkers of small vessel damage in cerebral amyloidangiopathy (CAA) include small, and typically silent, strictly lobar cerebral microbleeds (CMBs) and cortical superficial siderosis (cSS). To assess the association of cortical superficial siderosis (cSS) presence and extent with future bleeding risk including in CAA, other general and oral procedures.

**Material and Methods:** This was a meta-analysis of clinical cohorts of symptomatic patients with CAA who had T2\*- MRI at baseline and clinical follow-up for future intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH). We pooled data in a 2-stage meta-analysis using random effects models. Covariate-adjusted hazard ratios (adjHR) from multivariable Cox proportional hazard models were used.

**Results:** We included data from 6 eligible studies (n = 1,239). cSS pooled prevalence was 34%. During a mean follow-up of 3.1 years, 162/ 1,239 patients experienced a symptomatic ICH-pooled incidence rate 6.9% per year. ICH incidence rates per year according to cSS status were 3.9% for patients without cSS, 11.1% for cSS presence, 9.1% for focal cSS, and 12.5% for disseminated cSS. In adjusted pooled analysis, any cSS presence was independently associated with increased future ICH risk. Focal cSS was linked with ICH risk, while disseminated cSS conferred the strongest bleeding risk.

**Conclusion:** In patients with CAA, cSS presence and extent are the most important MRI

prognostic risk factors for future ICH, likely useful in treatment planning.

**Key words:** Cerebral amyloid angiopathy, Cortical superficial siderosis, bleeding.

## Introduction

Advanced cerebrovascular deposition of  $\beta$ -amyloid ( $A\beta$ ), defined neuropathologically as cerebral amyloid angiopathy (CAA), is a prevalent small-vessel disease and a leading cause of spontaneous lobar intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH).<sup>1</sup> The clinical management of symptomatic patients with CAA (presenting with or without ICH, in stroke or memory clinics) is thus centered around preventing future ICH, either first-ever or recurrent, since these are associated with substantial morbidity and mortality. Identifying strong risk factors of future CAA-related ICH, including hemorrhagic s

MRI biomarkers, is thus a crucial focus in the field.<sup>2</sup> Putative hemorrhagic MRI biomarkers of small vessel damage in CAA include small, and typically silent, strictly lobar cerebral microbleeds (CMBs) and cortical superficial siderosis (cSS). While more recently described in relationship to CMBs, cSS has been implicated as a specific MRI footprint of a more aggressive CAA phenotype. cSS quite characteristically follows the curvilinear shape of the surrounding cerebral gyri on T2\*-weighted MRI, reflecting blood breakdown products deposition that line the outermost surface of the cortex or the subarachnoid space (figure 1).<sup>3</sup> cSS is thought to result from superficial cortical hemorrhages (designated as convexity subarachnoid hemorrhage, when acute), likely as a consequence of brittle superficial cortical penetrators or leptomeningeal vessels affected by advanced cerebrovascular  $A\beta$  deposition.<sup>3,4</sup> cSS is rapidly gaining particular relevance to clinical practice as a marker for increased future CAA-related ICH risk in various different CAA patient populations and clinical settings.<sup>3,5,6</sup> The aim of this work is to bring together the totality of evidence and obtain precise estimates on the effect sizes of cSS as an independent predictor of future ICH risk in patients with CAA, across the spectrum of different clinical presentations and settings. We investigate this clinical question in a systematic review and meta-analysis of published studies on the topic

## Material and methods

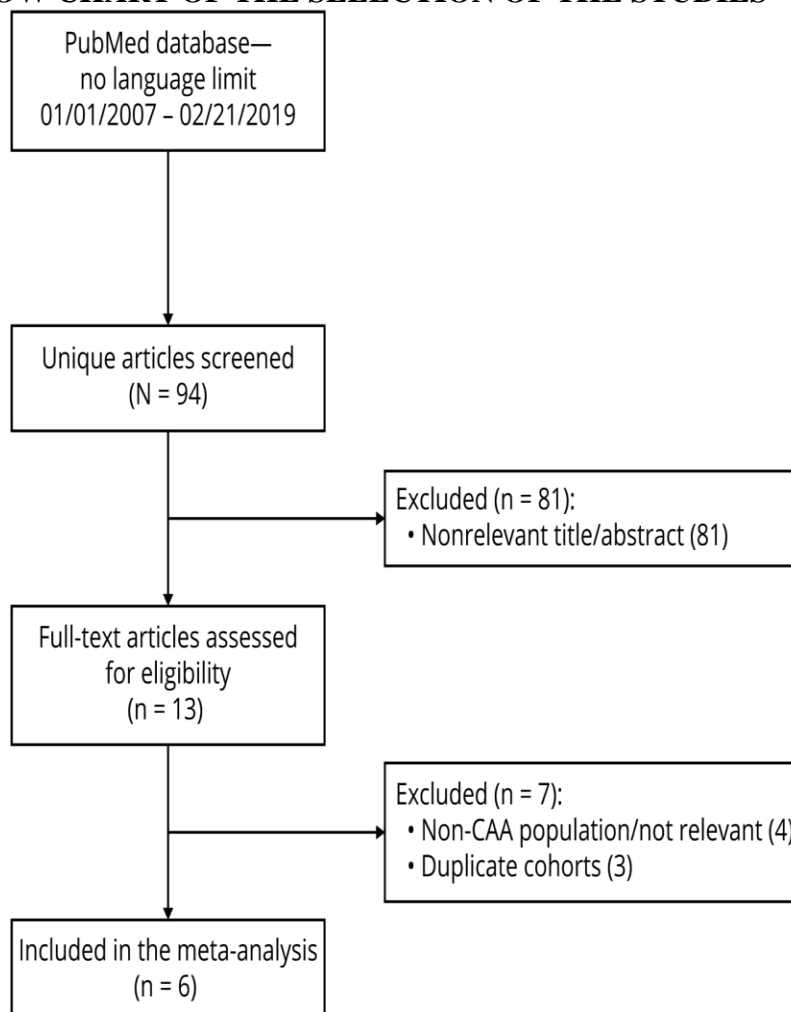
Online data was collected from the search engines of EBSCO, Pubmed, Google Scholar, Scopus. The searched terms were Siderosis, *general health, oral manifestations, cortical superficial siderosis*” or “*convexity siderosis*” or “*convexalsiderosis*” or “*cortical hemosiderosis*. The study articles were collected that from Jan 2019 to Feb 2021. Two reviewers independently checked the data collected and disputes resolved by consensus. The study was conducted with reference to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), Meta-analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology guidelines, and the Cochrane Hand- book for Systematic Reviews of Interventions. We excluded case reports, cohorts selected by having isolated cSS at baseline, and cohorts on familial CAA or CAA-related inflammation.

## Results

We included data from 6 eligible studies (n = 1,239). Fig 1 cSS pooled prevalence was 34% (95% confidence interval [CI] 26%–41%; I<sup>2</sup> 87.94%; p < 0.001): focal cSS prevalence was 14% (95% CI 12%–16%; I<sup>2</sup> 6.75%; p = 0.37), and disseminated cSS prevalence was 20% (95% CI 13%–26%; I<sup>2</sup> 90.39%; p < 0.001). During a mean follow-up of 3.1 years (range 1–4 years), 162/1,239 patients experienced a symptomatic ICH-pooled incidence rate 6.9% per year (95% CI

3.9%–9.8% per year; I<sup>2</sup> 83%;  $p < 0.001$ ). ICH incidence rates per year according to cSS status were 3.9% (95% CI 1.7%–6.1%; I<sup>2</sup> 70%;  $p = 0.018$ ) for patients without cSS, 11.1% (95% CI 7%–15.2%; I<sup>2</sup> 56.8%;  $p = 0.074$ ) for cSS presence, 9.1% (95% CI 5.5%–12.8%; I<sup>2</sup> 0%;  $p = 0.994$ ) for focal cSS, and 12.5% (95% CI 5.3%–19.7%; I<sup>2</sup> 73.2%;  $p = 0.011$ ) for disseminated cSS. In adjusted pooled analysis, any cSS presence was independently associated with increased future ICH risk (adjHR 2.14; 95% CI 1.19–3.85;  $p < 0.0001$ ). Focal cSS was linked with ICH risk (adjHR 2.11; 95% CI 1.31–2.41;  $p = 0.002$ ), while disseminated cSS conferred the strongest bleeding risk (adjHR 4.28; 95% CI 2.91–6.30;  $p < 0.0001$ ). Table 1, 2

**FIGURE 1: FLOW CHART OF THE SELECTION OF THE STUDIES**



**TABLE 1 BASIC ELEMENT OF INCLUDED STUDIES.**

Characteristics	Charidimou et al. <sup>9</sup>	Koo et al. <sup>13</sup>	Charidimou et al. <sup>10</sup>	Wollenweber et al. <sup>16</sup>	Charidimou et al. <sup>7</sup>	Moulin et al. <sup>17</sup>
Country/setting	European, retrospective, multicenter (4 hospitals)	Korea, retrospective, consecutive, single-center (2005–2013)	United States, prospective, consecutive, single-center (2000–2015)	Prospective, multicenter cohort (4 hospitals): SusPect-CAA (2013–2016)	United States, prospective, consecutive, single-center	France, prospective, consecutive, single-center: PITCH (2004–2009)
Inception point	Hospital admission with lobar ICH at baseline	Hospital admission with lobar ICH at baseline	Patients with CAA without ICH admitted to stroke (TFNEs) or memory clinics (cognitive complaints)	Patients presented at stroke services (n = 194) or memory clinics (n = 108)	Hospital admission with lobar ICH at baseline, survived 30 days after index event	Unselected survivors of spontaneous ICH with T2* MRI
T2* MRI measures (field strength/ET/ST)	T2*-GRE (1.5T/15–70 ms/5 mm)	T2*-GRE (3T/16 ms/5 mm)	T2*-GRE (SWI in 33%) (1.5T/50 ms/5 mm)	T2*-GRE/SWI (1.5 and 3T/??) (varied)	T2*-GRE (some cases: SWI) (1.5T/50 ms/5 mm)	T2*-GRE (1.5T/22.8 ms/5 mm)
Patient number (% men)	118 (51.7)	85 (57)	236 (60)	302 (40)	240 (53)	258 (58)
Diagnostic criteria used (possible/probable CAA)	Original Boston criteria	Modified Boston criteria	Modified Boston criteria: all patients: probable CAA	Modified Boston criteria <sup>a</sup> (possible: 88; probable: 214)	Original Boston criteria (possible: 92; probable: 148)	Not applied or reported
Age, y, mean/median (SD/IQR)	71.3 (95% CI 69.6–73)	70 (8)	81.8 (95% CI 66.6–97)	73 (SD 7)	75.2 (66.7–81.1)	76
Hypertension (%)	66 (61.1)	46 (54)	154 (65)	229 (76)	152 (63.3)	165 (64)
Previous ICH (%)	30 (25.4)	—	0	109 (36)	29 (12.1)	13 (0.05) [69 (27) with MRI old ICH]
Advance WMH (grade 2–3) (%)	52 (44.8)	52 (61)	78 (33)	Not reported	140 (58.3)	157 (61)
CMBs prevalence (%)	80 (67.8)	57 (67)	227 (96)	252 (83)	116 (48.3)	108 (42)
Follow-up method	Clinical records review, recurrent lobar ICH outcome events confirmed on brain CT	Clinical records review, recurrent lobar ICH outcome events confirmed on brain CT	Phone calls at 3 months after enrollment and every 6 months, chart review	Clinical visits (at 6 and 12 months), telephone interview, medical record review	Telephone follow-up, supplemented by chart review, outcome events confirmed on brain CT	Clinical visits (at 6 and 12 months and annually thereafter), telephone
Follow-up time, y (IQR)	2 (0.4–1.8)	3 (range 0.08–10.1)	3.26 (1.42–5.50)	1	2.6 (0.9–5.1)	6.4 (2.9–8.4)
Variables included in survival analysis adjusted models and in our models	Age (per year increase) <sup>b</sup> Previous lobar ICH (other than index event) Total WMH volume, per milliliter increase >5 CMBs presence cSS presence, burden <sup>c</sup>	Post-ICH antithrombotics use <sup>b</sup> CMB burden CSO-PVS severity cSS presence, burden <sup>b</sup>	Age <sup>b</sup> >5 lobar CMBs presence; severe WMH cSS presence, burden <sup>b</sup>	Age Number of CMB mRS <sup>c</sup> cSS presence, disseminated cSS <sup>b</sup>	Age (per year increase) <sup>b</sup> Multiple (>2) CMBs cSS presence, burden <sup>c</sup>	Old ICH Lobar CMBs presence Disseminated cSS <sup>b</sup>

**TABLE 2: RISK OF BIAS BASED ON THE NEWCASTLE–OTTAWA SCALE**

Key quality indicators	Charidimou et al. <sup>6</sup>	Koo et al. <sup>13</sup>	Charidimou et al. <sup>16</sup>	Wollenweber et al. <sup>18</sup>	Charidimou et al. <sup>7</sup>	Moulin et al. <sup>17</sup>
Prospective cohort	—	—	+	+	+	+
Clearly defined populations (and estimates separated per clinical setting/presentation)	+	+	+	+	—	—
Consecutive patients	+	+	+	—	+	+
Data on excluded patients presented among screened populations	—	—	+	—	+	+
Standardized and clearly defined MRI measures	+	+	+	—	+	+
Clear cSS definition, according to consensus guidelines	+	+	+	+	+	+
>1 year of mean/median follow-up	+	+	+	—	+	+
Completion of follow-up (>90%)	+	+	+	—	+	+
Fully adjusted survival models presented	+	—	+	? (OR vs HR)	+	—
No. of quality indicators fulfilled	7/9	6/9	9/9	3/9	8/9	7/9
Selection (Newcastle–Ottawa Scale)	****	***	*****	***	*****	***
Comparability (Newcastle–Ottawa Scale)	**	*	**	*	**	—
Outcome (Newcastle–Ottawa Scale)	***	***	***	**	***	***

## Discussion

Patients with cSS on MRI appear to have approximately 2 times the HR for future hemorrhage, compared to those without cSS. While focal cSS was also associated with doubling the bleeding hazards, the major driver of the elevated bleeding risk seems to be disseminated cSS with pooled HRs 4 times greater than in patients without cSS. These estimates were independent of previously identified risk factors for CAA-related hemorrhage, including increasing age and lobar CMBs, and were stable irrespective of whether patients with CAA presented with lobar ICH or other non-ICH syndromes at baseline. These results add substantially to an increasing body of evidence supporting cSS as a central and specific hemorrhagic footprint of advanced CAA.<sup>3</sup> The major clinical relevance of current findings is that cSS should play a key part in the routine bleeding risk stratification in patients with symptomatic CAA, including decision-making around prognosis and treatment. This becomes particularly important for anticoagulation decisions in CAA—currently, one of the hotly debated topics in the field.<sup>19,20</sup> Clinicians are often hesitant to prescribe oral anticoagulation in patients with suspected underlying CAA, who would otherwise have a strong indication for the medication (e.g., nonvalvular atrial fibrillation).<sup>20</sup>

Our results demonstrate that hemorrhagic risk, and hence the balance between hemorrhagic and cardioembolic stroke, is not uniform in patients with CAA. Instead, different CAA phenotypes with varying propensities towards bleeding can be dissected out based on the MRI presence and extent of cSS. The exact tipping point for when oral anticoagulation treatment should be avoided in patients with CAA in light of ICH risk and anticoagulation-related complications is difficult to calculate. However, a future incident/recurrent ICH rate of 12.5% per year (and HR of ;4) in the presence of disseminated cSS in the current meta-analysis identifies a specific CAA patient group in which the benefits of oral anticoagulation for preventing ischemic strokes should be carefully balanced in order to outweigh the risks.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the presence of atrial fibrillation might confer enough risk for ischemic stroke to offset the presumed ICH risk in the subset of patients with CAA without cSS and a CHA<sub>2</sub>DS<sub>2</sub> score >1–2. APOE e2 is known to be

associated with CAA-related ICH, perhaps causally, and predisposes to larger volumes of CAA-related bleeding. In recent studies, the *APOE* e2 allele had a higher prevalence among patients with CAA with cSS, especially when disseminated. Often these patients have cSS occurring in multiple brain locations and hence a large hematoma is very likely to be close to a cSS region without a real statistical topographic correlation. There is also direct neuropathologic evidence that microbleeds and larger symptomatic hemorrhages (e.g., macrobleeds) might be pathophysiologically distinct, and not in a continuum. These findings highlight the fact that cSS is more than just a cerebral sulcus equivalent of a microbleed—cSS is a distinct hemorrhagic signature of CAA and is strongly associated with risk of bleeding. Few limitations were seen in our study: (1) inherent limitations of CAA cohorts looking at baseline MRI markers and risk of future hemorrhage; and (2) limitations related to this type of aggregate data group-level meta-analysis. We also hypothesized based on prior studies that the effect of cSS in elevating future bleeding risk is independent of whether patients had a history of ICH. However, we have hypothesized, and confirmed, that the effect of the marker—in this case cSS—has a consistent effect in increasing the relative risk for future ICH across the spectrum of CAA.

## Conclusion

Altogether, data reported here solidify cSS as a biomarker of increased cortical and leptomeningeal small-vessel fragility and high CAA disease activity, heralding a high risk for future ICH. Our findings therefore provide a strong argument for using blood-sensitive T2\*-weighted MRI sequences to identify specific subgroups of patients with CAA at high risk for ICH. This could be helpful to inform and tailor treatment planning. Large international efforts in the field are underway to validate and expand these findings.

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