Analysis of Factors Affecting Air Kerma Area Product Obtained during Uterine Artery Embolization Procedures Using Logistic Regression

Khaled Soliman, Ahmed Almutairi, Murdhi AlHarbi, Khaleel Almutairi, Turky Almutairi, Mousa Bakkari

1Department of Medical Physics, Prince Sultan Military Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
2Department of Radiodiagnostic and Medical Imaging, Prince Sultan Military Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Purpose Uterine artery embolization (UAE) is a common interventional radiology procedure used in medicine; the procedure is safe but there is always a concern regarding radiation dose received by the patient. The aim of this study was to use multivariable logistic regression analysis (MLRA) to study a certain number of independent prognostic variables believed to provide an estimate of the likelihood of obtaining a high kerma area product ($P_{KA}$) at the end of the procedure.

Method Radiation dose indices registered by the angiographic system structured dose report, the total fluoroscopy time (FT), the patient’s body mass index (BMI), the number of images taken during the procedures (IMGS), and the performing physician experience (EXPER) were used to drive a logistic regression model (LRM).

Results The LRM found was: \[ \text{Logit} (P_{KA}) = -6.1525 + 0.0416 \times (FT) + 0.1028 \times (IMGS) + 0.1675 \times (BMI) - 0.1012 \times (EXPER). \] The prediction accuracy of the LRM was assessed using receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve; by calculating the area under the curve (AUC), we found AUC = 0.7896, with optimal ROC point of 0.3261, 0.8036.

Conclusion The suggested LRM seems to indicate that patients with higher BMI, have taken longer FT, acquired higher IMGS and the procedure done by a less experienced performing physician is more susceptible to receive a higher $P_{KA}$ at the end. The proposed LRM is useful in predicting the occurrence of higher radiation exposure interventions and can be used in patients’ radiation dose optimization strategies during UAE procedures.

Introduction Uterine artery embolization (UAE) is a minimal invasive procedure that requires fluoroscopic and angiographic imaging and this causes a concern regarding the radiation dose received by the patient during the intervention. It is known that angiographic imaging systems can deliver a significant amount of radiation to the patient’s skin; therefore, radiation dose monitoring is required. We have reviewed the radiation dose metrics available from the angiographic system for 102 UAE procedures performed on the system during the past year 2019. Along with the dosimetric metrics we have...
also included the body mass index (BMI) and the interventional radiologist experience (EXPER) to the variables that will be analyzed.

Multivariable logistic regression (MLR) analysis has been widely used as a method to identify prognostic factors affecting medical treatments outcome. The aim of this study was to analyze radiation dose-related metrics available from the angiographic system and from the radiology information system (RIS) and to use MLR to estimate the occurrence of high radiation dose procedures.

**Methods**

**Patient Characteristics**

In this study we have retrospectively collected from the angiographic system registered dose report and from the (RIS) data concerning 102 patients who underwent UAE procedures in 2019. Radiation dose indicators such as, the fluoroscopy time (FT) in minutes, the cumulative kerma area product ($P_{KA}$) in Gy cm², the cumulative reference air kerma ($K_{a,r}$) in mGy, the number of images taken during the procedure (IMGS), and the calculated patient body mass index (BMI) were collected. We also noted for each patient the experience of the performing physician in the form of total number of performed UAE procedures in the variable (EXPER). Table 1 has the summary of the patients’ data used in this work. This retrospective study was approved by the institution’s research ethics committee.

**Imaging Equipment**

We used a biplane system C-arm with flat detector angiography, AXIOM Artis dBA (Siemens, Erlangen, Germany).

**Logistic Regression Analysis**

A binary logistic regression model (LRM) was calculated using variables that may predict the level of cumulated $P_{KA}$ at the end of the procedure. It is known that $P_{KA}$ is related to the risk of exposure to radiation.

$P_{KA}$ is the binary outcome variable used in the analysis. High $P_{KA}$ levels are assigned the value of 1 and routine $P_{KA}$ levels will be assigned the value 0. The LRM will have the following form:

$$Y = \ln(\text{odds [event]}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \beta_n x_n (1)$$

In Eq. (1) the variable $Y$ is log (nature) of the odds of the event under consideration. In our case the event will be the occurrence of high $P_{KA}$ procedure. The $\beta$s are the coefficients of the regression calculated by the model and $n$ is the number of predictive variables. The odds ratios are the exponential of the coefficients and will be given by:

$$\text{Odds ratios} = \exp(\beta) \quad (2)$$

**Statistical Analysis**

The DAP values for 102 patients were dichotomized into two groups >300 Gy cm² and ≤300 Gy cm², the first group is considered as high radiation dose procedure (HRDP) and the second as routine radiation dose procedure.

The choice of 300 Gy cm² was based on the American Society of Vascular Interventional Radiology. They recommended alert levels to be displayed on the Angiographic system during the procedure, as to alert the surgeon that a DAP value of 300 Gy cm² has been reached. Furthermore 300 Gy cm² is considered an appropriate indicator for substantial radiation dose levels for most interventional radiology procedures.

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the independent variables which are able to estimate HRDP group during UAE and to propose a LRM for the prediction of HRDP.

**Table 1** Summary of 102 patients’ data and their associated radiation dose metrics

| FT (min) | IMGS | BMI (kg/m²) | EXPER | $P_{KA}$ (Gy cm²) | $K_{a,r}$ (mGy) |
|----------|------|-------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Mean     | 28   | 14.9        | 30.0  | 16.5              | 480             | 2,140           |
| Minimum  | 7.3  | 6.0         | 19.3  | 1                 | 0.46            | 9.14            |
| Maximum  | 105.9| 37          | 72.6  | 24                | 7,125           | 10,340          |
| Standard deviation | 15.7 | 5.8 | 6.9 | 5.3 | 991 | 1,882 |
| Coefficient of variation | 0.56 | 0.39 | 0.23 | 0.32 | 2.06 | 0.88 |

BMI, body mass index; FT, fluoroscopy time; EXPER, experience; IMGS, images.
Prognostic Variables of Air Kerma Area Product
Soliman et al.

Fig. 2 Boxplots showing the four predicting variables distribution for the two dependent variable categories: $P_{KA} > 300 \text{ Gy cm}^2$ and $P_{KA} \leq 300 \text{ Gy cm}^2$.

- Fig. 2 is showing the data distribution in the form of boxplots.

The statistical analysis was performed using Matlab (R2016b) statistics and machine learning toolbox (Natick, United States). A p-value of (<0.05) was considered statistically significant.

Results
As expected, a linear regression relationship was found between the cumulative air kerma measured at the reference point ($K_{a,r}$) and the cumulated kerma area product ($P_{KA}$), therefore $K_{a,r}$ was excluded from the list of the predicting independent variables. Fig. 1 contains scatter plot matrix of the $K_{a,r}$ and $P_{KA}$ as function of FT, IMGS, BMI, and EXPER variables.

Binary Logistic Regression Model
The degree of significance of four variables: FT, IMGS, BMI, and EXPER was examined. - Table 2 has the summary of the results. The obtained LRM with four predictors (variables) FT, IMGS, BMI and EXPER is given by the Eq. (3) below:

$$ \text{Logit} \left( P_{KA} \right) = -6.1525 + 0.0416 \times (\text{FT}) + 0.1028 \times (\text{IMGS}) + 0.1675 \times (\text{BMI}) - 0.1012 \times (\text{EXPER}) $$

These results show that an increase of one unit of FT (1 minute) will have an increase of 4.16% in the cumulative $P_{KA}$, similarly an increase of one unit in the number of images taken will have an increase of 10.2% in the cumulative $P_{KA}$ and an increase of 16.75% in the cumulative $P_{KA}$ value will have an increase of 10.12%; this variable is working in the advantage of lower $P_{KA}$ value as opposed to the other three variables that all working in the advantage of obtaining a larger $P_{KA}$ value.

The model was tested for goodness of fit with the DAP data using the area (AUC) under the ROC. The AUC was equal to 0.7896 with optimal ROC point coordinate of (0.3261,
Prognostic Variables of Air Kerma Area Product

Soliman et al.

0.8036. Fig. 3 shows the ROC for the four variables predictive model. The optimal ROC point seems to indicate a false positive rate of 32.6% and a true positive rate of 70.3% for the predictive model obtained.

Discussion

Comparing radiation dose values and dosimetric quantities among published studies is very difficult because the procedures identification are not standardized and also their complexity varies considerably and there is no classification for procedures in accordance with their respective complexity level yet. Therefore there is always a need to perform regular local clinical dose audits. In this work we have analyzed available patient dose-related metrics with the aim of identifying the metrics or variables that affect the patient radiation exposure the most represented by the kerma area product during UAE.

Kerma Area Products during UAE

There are several published studies reporting radiation dose assessments and dose reduction and optimization techniques. The reported values of $P_{KA}$ are in Table 3. In this study we have found a median $P_{KA}$ value of 347 Gy cm$^2$ for 102 UAE procedures conducted in 2019.

Suggested Reference Levels

The recommended dose reference level (DRL) for UAE was set at 450 Gy cm$^2$ and the reported 75th percentile $P_{KA}$ from the radiation doses in interventional radiology procedures study (RAD-IR) data was 392 Gy cm$^2$.

Procedures with DAP values above 300 Gy cm$^2$ should be optimized if possible. A recent study suggests using a DAP value of 50 Gy cm$^2$ as target value for UAE procedures. In this study the authors suggested strategies for reducing radiation exposure during UAE; the strategies included: optimized source image and object image distances, avoidance of magnification, use of road-mapping, avoidance of oblique projections, use of pulsed fluoroscopy with low images per second, use of low frame rates, use of last-image-hold, and avoid three-dimensional rotational angiography.

Table 2 Results of the multivariable logistic regression analysis for all the variables that may be related to the occurrence of high radiation exposure UAE procedure

| $p$-Value | OR (95% CI) | OR  | B   | Variables |
|-----------|-------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| 0.0014    |             |     | 6.1525 | Intercept |
| 0.0508    | (1.000–1.087) | 1.042 | 0.0416 | FT        |
| 0.0643    | (0.994–1.236) | 1.108 | 0.1028 | IMGS      |
| 0.0008    | (1.072–1.304) | 1.182 | 0.1675 | BMI       |
| 0.0485    | (0.817–0.999) | 0.904 | 0.1012 | EXPER     |

Abbreviations: B, regression coefficients; OR, odds ratio; $p$, the $p$-value.

Table 3 Some of the reported PKA in the literature

| Author         | Year | $P_{KA}$ (Gy cm$^2$) | $K_{a,r}$ (Gy) | n  |
|----------------|------|----------------------|---------------|----|
| Miller et al   | 2009 | 392                  | 2.5           | 90 |
| Vano et al     | 2009 | 236                  |               |    |
| Ruiz-Cruces et al | 2016 | 214                  |               | 56 |
| Durrani et al  | 2016 | 437 (267)$^a$        |               |    |
| Kohlbrenner et al | 2017 | 438 (175)$^a$      |               |    |
| Schernthaner et al | 2018 | 527 (146)$^a$         |               |    |
| This study     | 2020 | 347                  | 2.1           | 100|

$^a$The values in parentheses are the values obtained after applying imaging system optimization.

Fig. 3 The ROC curve for the proposed four predictive variables logistic regression model. ROC, receiver operating characteristic.
The use of optimization strategies will reduce the radiation dose received by the patients as well as the staff performing the procedure especially in cases expected to lead to a higher than usual radiation dose like for obese patients.13

A recent study had concluded that during UAE procedures, BMI had the greatest impact on the cumulated K_{ar} and has a substantial impact on the risk of radiation-induced skin injury even without prolonged FT.14

**Performing Physician Experience**

The effect of interventional radiologist experience on FT and K_{ar} was studied, and the conclusion was: although there was no nonsignificant trend for shorter screening times with experience, technical success and safety were not compromised with appropriate consultant supervision, which illustrates a safe construct for IR training. This is important and reassuring information for patients undergoing a procedure in a training unit.15

This conclusion is not in agreement with this study since we have found a statistically significant correlation between the operator experience and the reported P_{KAP} (p = 0.0485).8

**Complexity Level of the Procedure**

Another study suggested after analyzing 56 UAE procedures, to include procedure complexity levels to facilitate clinical audits and proper use of DRLs in terms of P_{KAP} for patient dose optimization in interventional radiology. They recommend DRLs of 167, 214, and 613 Gy cm² for simple, medium, and complex index UAE procedures, respectively. Statistical analyses (r Pearson and ANOVA test) identified significant correlations between the complexity score and patient dose (KAP) for all of the procedures (F < 0.05).8

**Limitations**

This retrospective study analyzed data from one medical center during 1 year and included 102 patients; the study was on one imaging system only. The study did not include information about the complexity level of the procedure. The level of complexity was reported in the literature to have an effect on the DRLs. Expanding the study to include more than one imaging system, multiple medical centers, and procedure complexity level, when possible, will improve the accuracy of the proposed predictive LRM. Furthermore, a follow-up study aiming at validating the proposed model using other patients’ data is recommended.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results of this retrospective study suggest that a UAE procedure having a cumulative DAP higher than 300 Gy cm² is likely to occur in procedures having patients with higher BMI values, have taken longer FT, acquired higher IMGS, and were accomplished by a less experienced performing physician.

The proposed LRM is useful in predicting the occurrence of higher radiation exposure interventions and can be used in patients’ radiation dose optimization strategies during UAE procedures.

**Funding**

None.

**Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

**References**

1 Balter S, Hopewell JW, Miller DL, Wagner JK, Zelefsky MJ. Fluoroscopically guided interventional procedures: a review of radiation effects on patients’ skin and hair. Radiology 2010;254(2):326–341
2 McCarthy CJ, Kilcoyne A, Li X, et al. Radiation dose and risk estimates of CT-guided percutaneous liver ablations and factors associated with dose reduction. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2018;41(12):1935–1942
3 Stecker MS, Balter S, Towbin RB, et al. SIR Safety and Health Committee; CIRSE Standards of Practice Committee. Guidelines for patient radiation dose management. J Vasc Interv Radiol 2009;20(suppl 7):S526–S523
4 Balter S, Miller DL. Patient skin reactions from interventional fluoroscopy procedures. AJR Am J Roentgenol 2014;202(4):W335–42
5 Dauer LT, Thornton R, Erdi Y, et al. Estimating radiation doses to the skin from interventional radiology procedures for a patient population with cancer. J Vasc Interv Radiol 2009;20(6):782–788, quiz 789
6 Miller DL, Kwon D, Bonavia GH. Reference levels for patient radiation doses in interventional radiology: proposed initial values for U.S. practice. Radiology 2009;253(3):753–764
7 Vano E, Sanchez R, Fernandez JM, et al. Patient dose reference levels for interventional radiology: a national approach. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2009;32(1):19–24
8 Ruiz-Cruces R, Vano E, Carrera-Magariño F, et al. Diagnostic reference levels and complexity indices in interventional radiology: a national programme. Eur Radiol 2016;26(12):4268–4276
9 Kohlbrenner R, Kolli KP, Taylor AG, et al. Radiation dose reduction during uterine fibroid embolization using an optimized imaging platform. J Vasc Interv Radiol 2017;28(8):1129–1135.e1
10 Durrani RJ, Fischman AM, van der Bom IM, et al. Radiation dose reduction utilizing noise reduction technology during uterine artery embolization: a pilot study. Clin Imaging 2016;40(2):378–381
11 Schernthaner RE, Haroun RR, Nguyen S, et al. Characteristics of a new X-ray imaging system for interventional procedures: improved image quality and reduced radiation dose. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2018;41(3):502–508
12 Scheurig-Muenkler C, Powerski MJ, Mueller JC, Kroencke TJ. Radiation exposure during uterine artery embolization: effective measures to minimize dose to the patient. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2015;38(3):613–622
13 Shah A, Das P, Subkovas E, Buch AN, Rees M, Bellamy C. Radiation dose during coronary angiogram: relation to body mass index. Heart Lung Circ 2015;24(1):21–25
14 Lacayo EA, Khera SS, Spies JB. Impact of patient and procedure-related factors on radiation exposure from uterine artery embolization. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2020;43(1):120–126
15 Das R, Lucatelli P, Wang H, Belli AM. Identifying the learning curve for uterine artery embolisation in an interventional radiological training unit. Cardiovasc Intervent Radiol 2015;38(4):871–877