2012* Clinical Practice Guideline on the Evaluation and Management of von Willebrand Disease (VWD)


*This quick reference guide was revised in 2012.
I. Evaluation

A. History

Ask the following broad questions:

- Have you or a blood relative ever needed medical attention for a bleeding problem or been told you had a bleeding problem?
- Have you ever had a blood disorder, or liver or kidney disease?
- Are you currently taking or have you recently taken anticoagulation or antiplatelet medications?

If answers to questions above are positive, ask the following questions:

- Do you have a blood relative with a bleeding disorder?
- Have you ever had any of the following symptoms?
  - Bleeding from trivial wounds lasting >15 minutes or recurring spontaneously during the 7 days after the injury
  - Heavy, prolonged, or recurrent bleeding after surgical procedures
  - Bruising with minimal or no apparent trauma, especially if you could feel a lump under the bruise
  - Spontaneous nosebleed lasting >10 minutes or that required medical attention
  - Heavy, prolonged, or recurrent bleeding after dental extractions that required medical attention
  - Blood in your stool that required medical attention and was unexplained by an anatomic lesion (stomach ulcer, colon polyp)
  - Anemia that required a blood transfusion or other type of treatment
  - Heavy menses characterized by clots >1 inch diameter, changing a pad or tampon more than hourly, or resulting in anemia or low iron levels
- Refer to the bleeding score table (panel 2) to help determine the likelihood of a bleeding disorder including possible VWD.

B. Physical Examination

Perform a physical examination to include evaluation for:

- Evidence of bleeding or anemia, including size, location, and distribution of ecchymoses, hematomas, and petechiae
- Evidence of risks of increased bleeding such as jaundice or spider angioma, splenomegaly, arthropathy, joint and skin laxity, and telangiectasia.

C. Special Considerations for the Laboratory Diagnosis of VWD

- Patients should be at optimal baseline at the time of testing. Undue stress (illness, struggling or crying in children, anxiety in adults) may transiently elevate WVF and FVIII levels.
- Very recent exercise, acute inflammation due to surgeries or infection, chronic inflammation such as from autoimmune diseases or diabetes, pregnancy, and estrogen containing contraceptives may also elevate VWF levels.
- Atraumatic blood draws limit the exposure of tissue factor from the site and clotting factor activation, thus minimizing falsely high or low levels.
- Careful handling and processing of samples is critical. Samples must be prompt and thoroughly centripeted. Samples that will be transported to a reference laboratory must be frozen and delivered promptly and remain frozen until assayed.

D. Bleeding Score

The bleeding score is determined by scoring the worst episode for each symptom (each row) and then summing all of the rows together. “Consultation only” refers to a patient consulting a medical professional (doctor, nurse, dentist) because of a symptom but no treatment being given. For VWD, a bleeding score ≥ 4 has a sensitivity of 100%, specificity of 87%, positive predictive value of 0.20, negative predictive value of 1.00. The higher the bleeding score, the greater the likelihood of a bleeding disorder including possible VWD. For more information, please visit www.path.queensu.ca/labs/james/bq.htm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>score 0</th>
<th>score 1</th>
<th>score 2</th>
<th>score 3</th>
<th>score 4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistaxis</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gluteous</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bleeding from minor wounds</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral cavity</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastro-intestinal bleeding</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menorrhagia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpartum hemorrhage</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle hemotomas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemarthrosis</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONS bleeding</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Assessment Algorithm

Assessment for VWD or Other Bleeding Disorders

Positive Initial Screen by History & Physical Exam

**Initial Hemostasis Tests**
- CBC and platelet count
- PT and PTT
- Fibrinogen or TT (optional)

If bleeding history is strong, consider performing initial VWD assays

Other cause identified, e.g., extremely low platelets, isolated abnormal PT, low fibrinogen, abnormal TT

Isolated prolonged PTT that corrects on 1:1 mixing study, or no abnormalities

Other Appropriate Evaluation

- VWF:Ag
- VWF:RCo
- FVIII

Selected specialized VWD studies such as:
- Repeat initial VWD assays if necessary
- Ratio of VWF:RCo to VWF:Ag
- Multimer distribution
- Collagen binding
- RIPA or platelet binding
- FVIII binding
- Platelet VWD studies
- DNA sequencing of VWF gene

Abnormal

Consider testing such as:
- Factor IX, Factor XI (if PTT prolonged)
- Platelet function testing
- Factor XIII testing
- Evaluation for Ehlers Danlos syndrome

Natural

CBC=complete blood count, FVIII=factor VIII activity, PT=prothrombin time, PTT=partial thromboplastin time, TTR=thrombin time, VWF:Ag=VWF antigen, VWF:RCo=VWF ristocetin cofactor activity
III. Laboratory Diagnosis

Lab values for VWD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>VWF:RCo (IU/dL)</th>
<th>VWF:Ag (IU/dL)</th>
<th>FVIII</th>
<th>VWF:RCo/VWF:Ag Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>Partial quantitative VWF deficiency</td>
<td>&lt;30**</td>
<td>&lt;30**</td>
<td>Low or Normal</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2A</td>
<td>Decreased VWF-dependent platelet adhesion with selective deficiency of high-molecular-weight multimers</td>
<td>&lt;30**</td>
<td>&lt;30-200**</td>
<td>Low or Normal</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2B</td>
<td>Increased affinity for platelet GPIb decreased platelets</td>
<td>&lt;30**</td>
<td>&lt;30-200**</td>
<td>Low or Normal</td>
<td>Usualy &lt;0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2M</td>
<td>Decreased VWF-dependent platelet adhesion without selective deficiency of high-molecular-weight multimers</td>
<td>&lt;30**</td>
<td>&lt;30-200**</td>
<td>Low or Normal</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2N</td>
<td>Markedly decreased binding affinity for FVIII</td>
<td>30-200</td>
<td>30-200</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>Virtually complete deficiency of VWF</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>Extremely Low (≤10 IU/dL)</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Low VWF&quot;</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>50-200</td>
<td>50-200</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>&gt;0.5-0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These values represent prototypical cases. Exceptions occur, and repeat testing may be necessary.

**<30 IU/dL is designated as the level for a definitive diagnosis of VWD; some patients with type 1 or type 2 VWD have levels of VWF:RCo and/or VWF:Ag of 30-50 IU/dL.

NOTE: 30 IU/dL is recommended as the "cut-off" for the definitive diagnosis of VWD for the following reasons: 1) high frequency of blood type O in the United States, which is associated with "low" VWF levels; 2) bleeding symptoms are reported by a significant proportion of normal individuals; 3) abnormalities in the VWF gene have been identified in many individuals who have mildly to moderately low VWF:RCo levels. This does not preclude the use of agents to increase VWF levels in those who have VWF:RCo of 30-50 IU/dL and who may be at risk for bleeding.

IV. Selected Recommendations for the Management of VWD

A. Therapies to Elevate VWF: Desmopressin (DDAVP)
   - Administration of DDAVP may be IV (0.3 mcg/kg) or intranasal (Stimate®/Octostim® 150 mcg or 1 spray for persons <50 kg and 300 mcg or 2 sprays for persons weighing ≥50 kg).
   - A therapeutic trial of DDAVP is recommended prior to use. VWF:RCo and FVIII activities should be measured at baseline and within 1 hour. Additional testing 2-4 hours after DDAVP should be considered to evaluate for shortened survival.
   - Most type 1 VWD patients will respond to DDAVP, although patients with VWF:RCo <10 IU/dL and FVIII activity <20 IU/dL are less likely to have a clinically significant response.
   - In type 2 VWD, DDAVP will increase the VWF concentration, but the VWF dysfunction will still be present. In type 2B VWD, DDAVP may result in transient thrombocytopenia. Therefore, DDAVP should be used with caution in type 2 VWD.
   - Side effects include facial flushing, transient hyper- or hypotension, headache, abdominal upset, and water retention. Patients should limit fluid intake to maintenance levels for 24 hours following DDAVP. Serum electrolytes should be monitored after surgery or multiple doses of DDAVP.
   - Consider alternative therapies to DDAVP in young children and patients at increased risk of hyponatremia and seizures.
   - To avoid tachyphylaxis, DDAVP therapy is typically discontinued after 2 or 3 daily doses.

B. Therapies to Elevate VWF: Factor Products
   - **Von Willebrand Factor Replacement Products (available in United States)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>VWF:RCo activity (IU/ml)</th>
<th>FVIII activity (IU/ml)</th>
<th>Ratio of VWF:RCo to FVIII activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koate DVI®</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphanate SD/HT®</td>
<td>16-72</td>
<td>40-180</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. General Management of VWD Patients
   - Long-term prophylaxis is rarely required, but should be considered for recurrent joint bleeding or excessive mucocutaneous bleeding not adequately controlled by other treatments.
   - Avoid aspirin, other NSAIDs, and other platelet-inhibiting drugs.

D. Notes on Treatment of Minor Bleeding and Prophylaxis for Minor Surgery
   - Minor bleeding should be treated with intravenous or nasal DDAVP, if supported by results of a DDAVP trial.
   - If response to DDAVP is inadequate, VWF concentrate should be used, with dosing primarily based on VWF:RCo units and secondarily on FVIII units.
   - For minor surgery, prophylaxis should achieve VWF:RCo and FVIII activity levels ≥30 IU/dL, and preferably >50 IU/dL, for 1-5 days.
   - Management of minor bleeding with DDAVP and proper fluid restriction can be performed without electrolyte monitoring unless DDAVP is used ≥3 times in 72 hours.
   - For mild to moderate VWD, antibrinolitics combined with DDAVP are generally effective for oral surgery.

E. Notes on Treatment of Major Bleeding and Prophylaxis for Major Surgery
   - All treatment plans should be based on objective laboratory determinations of response of VWF:RCo and FVIII activity levels to DDAVP or VWF concentrate.
   - For severe bleeding (e.g., intracranial, retroperitoneal) or prophylaxis of major surgery, initial target VWF:RCo and Factor VIII activity levels should be >100 IU/dL, and levels >50 IU/dL should be maintained for at least 7-10 days.
   - In all patients receiving VWF concentrate, clinicians should perform proper thrombotic-risk assessment and institute appropriate strategies to prevent thrombosis.
   - To decrease risk of perioperative thrombosis, VWF:RCo levels should not exceed 200 IU/dL, and FVIII activity should not exceed 250 IU/dL.

F. Women’s Health and von Willebrand Disease
   - Hormonal contraceptives are the first-line therapy for menorrhagia in the adolescent or adult woman who does not desire pregnancy.
   - During childbirth, women should achieve VWF:RCo and FVIII levels of at least 50 IU/dL before delivery, and those levels should be maintained for 3-5 days, with subsequent surveillance for delayed post-partum bleeding.

G. Acquired von Willebrand Syndrome (AVWS)
   - Defects in VWF concentration, structure, or function that are not inherited directly but are consequences of other medical disorders.
   - Associated with monoclonal gammopathy, aortic stenosis, thrombocytosis, myelo- or lymphoproliferative disorders, hypothyroidism, congenital heart disease, and solid tumors.
   - AVWS patients undergoing surgery may merit pharmacokinetic trial of DDAVP and/or VWF concentrate to evaluate possible accelerated clearance of VWF.
About this Clinical Quick Reference Guide


Guidelines provide the practitioner with clear principles and strategies for quality patient care and do not establish a fixed set of rules that preempt physician judgment.

For further information, please see the complete guidelines on the NHLBI website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/vwd or refer to the Practice Guidelines section of the ASH website at www.hematology.org/policy/resources/guidelines. You may also contact the ASH Department of Government Relations, Practice, and Scientific Affairs at 202-776-0544.

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