

Comparing Mid-Term Outcomes of Cox-Maze Procedure and Pulmonary Vein Isolation for Atrial Fibrillation After Concomitant Mitral Valve Surgery: A Systematic Review

Davorin Sef¹, Vladimir Trkulja², Shahzad Raja¹, Joanne Hooper³, and Marko Turina⁴

¹Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals

²Department of Pharmacology Zagreb University School of Medicine Zagreb Croatia EU

³University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

⁴UniversitätsSpital Zurich

April 29, 2022

Abstract

Background: Although concomitant pulmonary vein isolation (PVI) is used more frequently than the Cox-maze procedure, which is currently the gold standard treatment for AF, data on the comparative effectiveness of the two procedures after concomitant mitral valve (MV) surgery are still limited. **Objective:** We conducted a systematic review to identify randomized controlled trials (RCT) and observational studies comparing the mid-term mortality and recurrence of atrial fibrillation (AF) after concomitant Cox-Maze and PVI in patients with AF undergoing MV surgery based on 12-month follow-up. **Methods:** Medline, EMBASE databases, and the Cochrane Library were searched from 1987 up to March 2022 for studies comparing concomitant Cox-Maze and PVI. A meta-analysis of RCTs was performed to compare the mid-term clinical outcomes between these two surgical ablation techniques. **Results:** Three RCTs and 3 observational studies meeting the inclusion criteria were included with 790 patients in total (532 concomitant Cox-Maze and 258 PVI during MV surgery). Regarding AF recurrence, estimate pooled across the 3 RCTs indicated large heterogeneity and high uncertainty. In the largest and highest quality RCT, 12-month AF recurrence was higher in the PVI arm (RR=1.58, 95%CI 0.91-2.73). In 2 out of 3 higher quality observational studies, 12-month AF recurrence was higher in PVI than in Cox-Maze arm (estimated adjusted probabilities 11% vs. 8% and 35% vs. 17%, respectively). RCTs demonstrated comparable 12-month mortality between concomitant Cox-Maze and PVI, while observational studies demonstrated survival benefit of Cox-Maze. **Conclusions:** Concomitant Cox-Maze in AF patients undergoing MV surgery is associated with better mid-term freedom from AF when compared to PVI with comparable mid-term survival. Large observational studies suggest that there might be a mid-term survival benefit among patients after concomitant Cox-Maze. Further large RCTs with longer standardized follow-up are required in order to clarify benefits of concomitant Cox-Maze in AF patients during MV surgery.

1. Introduction

Up to 50% of patients undergoing mitral valve (MV) surgery experience preoperative atrial fibrillation (AF)¹. Incidence of stroke in patients with AF who are optimally anticoagulated remains between 2-5% per year, depending on the individual risk factors². Surgical ablation during MV surgery has now been clearly shown to be associated with a reduced 30-day mortality and stroke and is recommended at the time of concomitant mitral operations to restore sinus rhythm^{1,3-6}. The performance rate of concomitant surgical ablation in patients with AF at the time of MV surgery has risen from 52% to 62% over the last decade⁷.

The first maze procedure (Cox-Maze I) was performed by James Cox on September 25, 1987⁸. The procedure evolved into the Cox-Maze III and became the gold standard surgical treatment of AF^{3,9}. In 2002, Damiano

and associates have modified the Cox-Maze III technique and replaced the majority of the incisions with a combination of bipolar radiofrequency (RF) and cryothermal ablation lines in a procedure termed the Cox-Maze IV, which has shortened and simplified the operation and has decreased morbidity and mortality¹⁰. The Cox-Maze IV is currently the gold standard surgical treatment for AF, with estimated freedom from AF and from antiarrhythmic drugs (AAD) at 1 year postoperatively of 93% and 85%, respectively¹¹. However, concomitant pulmonary vein isolation (PVI) is still being used more frequently than the Cox-Maze procedure as it is the simplest and most rapidly completed set of ablation lesions¹². In addition, PVI can be performed without cardiopulmonary bypass in coronary artery bypass graft surgery¹³.

In the attempt to evaluate mid-term efficacy and safety of concomitant Cox-Maze relative to PVI in patients with AF undergoing MV surgery, we conducted a systematic review to critically evaluate randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and non-randomized studies directly comparing the two procedures in this setting with additional subgroup meta-analysis of RCTs.

2. Patients and Methods

2.1. Study Protocol

This systematic review was conducted in line with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) and AMSTAR (Assessing the methodological quality of systematic reviews) Guidelines. The study protocol was registered with the PROSPERO register of systematic reviews (PROSPERO ID: CRD42021250576)¹⁴.

2.2. Literature Search and Study Selection

An initial scoping search and a systematic literature search were performed by a medical librarian to identify RCTs and observational studies that compared concomitant Cox-Maze and PVI in patients who underwent MV surgery. Medline, EMBASE databases, and the Cochrane Library were searched from 1987 up to 15th of March 2022 using the following search terms: Maze surgery, Maze procedure, Maze technique, maze or Cox-Maze vs. pulmonary vein isolation, ablation surgery, ablation procedure, surgical ablation. Details of the search strategy are provided in the Supplement.

We defined 12-month mortality and recurrence of AF postoperatively as outcomes of interest. We expected that variety of outcomes illustrating efficacy/safety would be reported, but they were not reported consistently over the studies.

After deduplication, study eligibility was assessed independently by two investigators. Any discrepancies were resolved by discussion between the 3 investigators. The studies were selected through the following two levels of screening: in the first step studies were independently screened based on titles and abstracts, and in the second step, full-text reports were evaluated based on predefined criteria. Studies were eligible if they compared outcomes in patients with AF undergoing MV surgery and concomitant Cox-Maze procedure or PVI and met the following inclusion criteria:

1. Population: adults or adolescents (12 years or older)
2. Comparator: Cox-Maze vs PVI
3. Provided outcomes: death, recurrence of AF at 12-month follow-up
4. Design: RCT or non-randomized studies of interventions (NRSI) with at least 20 patients *per* treatment of interest
5. Published in English language.

Studies were ineligible if they had follow-up shorter than 12 months and if they were duplicates. For studies reported in more than one publication, or when institutions reported subsequent studies with accumulating numbers of patients or increased lengths of follow-up, only the most complete reports (in terms of reported outcomes and control of confounding) were included.

Τη βενεφίτ οφ ζονομοιταντ δξ-Μαζε ιν μιτραλ πατιεντς ωιτη ΑΦ ις ιν λινε ωιτη τηε ρεσουλτς οφ οττερ στудιες τηατ ηαε νοτ ονλψ σπρωιν βοτη φρεεδομ φρομ ΑΦ ανδ μορταλιτψ βενεφίτ, βυτ ηαε αλσο δεμονστρατεδ ιμπροεμεντ ιν χυαλιτψ οφ λιφε³⁰⁻³³. Ηωωερ, ουρ συβγρουπ αναλψσις ωιτη μετα-αναλψσις οφ Ρ*Τς διδ νοτ συγγεστ τηατ τηερε ις α σιγνιφικαντ συριαλ βενεφίτ οφ ζονομοιταντ δξ-Μαζε προσεδυρε αμονγ Ρ*Τς. Τηις ζαν βε εξπλαινεδ βψ τηε φαστ τηατ ονε οφ τηε Ρ*Τς ωας ποτεντιαλλψ υνδερπωωρεδ ανδ βιασεδ ας μανψ ζασες ωερε εξζλυδεδ φρομ ρανδομιζατιον οερ τηε στυδιψ περιουδ²². Φυρτηερωρε, ιν τηε σαμε Ρ*Τ αλλ πατιεντς ωιτη ποστοπερατιε ΑΦ ωερε ιντενσελψ τρεατεδ ιν ορδερ το ρεστορε τηε σινυς ρηψητημ. Ηωωερ, ιτ ηας αλσο βεεν διφωσιγυλτ το δεμονστρατε α συριαλ βενεφίτ ιν μιτραλ πατιεντς αρτερ ζονομοιταντ δξ-Μαζε προσεδυρε ιν οττερ ρεπορτς³⁴. Τηις μαψ βε ρελατεδ το α φεω ρεασονς συζη ας λιμιτεδ ζοηορτς ανδ σπορτ φολλοω-υπ στυδιψ περιουδς ιν Ρ*Τς. Ον τηε οττερ ηανδ, σεεραλ οβσερατιοναλ στυδιες ωιτη λαργερ δατα σετς ηαε ρεπορτεδ σιγνιφικαντ συριαλ βενεφίτς^{24,25}. Ηωωερ, γιεν τηατ ΑΦ ηας βεεν ελεαρλψ δεμονστρατεδ το βε αν ινδεπενδεντ πρεδιςτορ οφ μορταλιτψ, ρεστορατιον οφ σινυς ρηψητημ ις ιταλ φορ χυαλιτψ οφ λιφε ανδ συριαλ³⁵.

Ιντερεστινγγλφ, ως φουνδ ζονσομιταντ δξ-Μαζε το βε ασσοσιατεδ ωιτη σομεωηατ λωωερ ρατες οφ Μ' ρεπαир. Της ζαν βε παρτιαλλφ εξπλανεδ βψ της τεζηνιζαλ ζομπλεξιτψ οφ της προσεδυρε ανδ, τηρεφορε, γρεατερ λιχεληροδ οφ δεζισιον το προσεδδ ωιτη αλε ρεπλαζεμεντ ινστεαδ οφ ρεπαир ωην ζονσιδερινγ περφορμινγ μορε ζομπλεξ αβλατιον προσεδυρε. Ηωωερ, φορ οπτιμαλ ουτσομες της συργεονς σπυυλδ βεζομε μορε σκιλλεδ ιν της δξ-Μαζε τεζηνιγυε τηρουγγ φελλωωσηπ τραινινγ, πεερ-το-πεερ εδυατιον, ορ προστοροσηπ ³.

5

στυδιες, τηρεφορε της ρεπορτεδ ουτσομες μιγητ νοτ ρεφλεςτ της τρυε ουτσομες ωιτην της στυδιες. Φυτυρε τριαλς ζαν βε ιμπροεδ βψ αδηερινγ το της περφορμανς ανδ ρεπορτινγ στανδαρδς το βεττερ εαλυατε της εφφεστ οφ ζονσομιταντ ΑΦ συργερψ. Τηρεφορε, ωε ωουλδ λιχε το εμπηασιζε τηατ της στανδαρδιζεδ ποστοπερατιε φολλωω-υπ προτοζολ σηνουδ ινζλυδε ρεγυλαρ ουτπατιεντ ισιτς δυρινγ της φιστ 24 μοντης ανδ αννουαλλψ τηρεαφτερ³. Α 12-λεαδ ελεςτροςαρδιογραμ σηνουδ βε οβταινεδ ατ εερψ φολλωω-υπ ισιτς ωηιλε α 24-ηουρ Ηολτερ μονιτορ ατ εερψ φολλωω-υπ ισιτς αφτερ 6 μοντης, ζονσιςτεντ ωιτη εσταβλισηδ γυιδελινες^{39,44}. Στιλλ, εεν ωιτη της φολλωω-υπ Ηολτερ μονιτορινγ, νοτ αλλ εεντς μαψ βε ζαπτυρεδ. Λονγ-τερμ ουτσομε ασσεσμεντ μαψ ηελπ εαλυατε ωηετηερ τψπε οφ ζονσομιταντ ΑΦ συργερψ ινφλυενςες μορταλιτψ, νευρολογικαλ ορ τηρομβοεμβολις ρισκ, ωηικη αρε της πριμαρψ γοαλς οφ ΑΦ τρεατμεντ. Λαργε ηιγη-χυαλιτψ ρανδομιζεδ τριαλς εαλυατινγ της εφφεστ οφ διφφερεντ ΑΦ συργερψ τψπες ανδ λεσιον σετς ανδ ζομπαρινγ ουτσομες ωιτην διφφερεντ ΑΦ συβγρουπς ζουλδ προιδε γυιδανςε αβουτ ωηικη ιντερεντιον ηας της μοστ φαοραβλε εφφικαςψ ανδ σαφετψ προφιλε.

5. δονςλυσιονς

Της σψςτεματις ρειεω φουνδ τηατ ζονσομιταντ δξ-Μαζε ιν ΑΦ πατιεντς υνδεργοινγ Μ΄ συργερψ ις ασσοσιατεδ ωιτη α στρονγ तेन्दενςψ οφ βεττερ μιδ-τερμ φρεεδομ φρομ ΑΦ ωην ζομπαρεδ το Π΄Ι ωιτη ζομπααραβλε μιδ-τερμ ποστοπερατιε συριαλ ουτσομες. Λαργε οβσερατιοναλ στυδιες συγγεστεδ τηατ τηρε μιγητ βε α μιδ-τερμ συριαλ βεनेφιτ φορ πατιεντς υνδεργοινγ ζονσομιταντ δξ-Μαζε προςεδυρε, αλτηουγη λαργε μυλτιςεντερ Ρ΄Τ αρε στιλλ νεεδεδ το ασσεσς της λονγ-τερμ συριαλ βεनेφιτ οφ δξ-Μαζε προςεδυρε. Συςζεσσφυλ ιντραοπερατιε αβλατιον οφ ΑΦ ιμπροες ουτσομες ανδ της της ιδεαλ οπερατιον ωουλδ ζορρεστ βοτη Μ΄ δψσφυνςτιον ανδ ΑΦ.

Ετηικαλ αππροαλ: Νοτ διρεςτψ αππλιςαβλε σινςε της ις α ρειεω αρτιςλε.

Αυτηορ ζοντρυβυτιονς: ΔΣ: ζονςεπτουαλιζατιον, φορμαλ αναλψσις, ινεστιγατιον, μετρηοδολογψ, αλιδατιον, ρεσυρςες, ωριτινγ – οριγιναλ δραφτ, ζριτικαλ ρεισιον ανδ αππροαλ οφ της αρτιςλε. ΄Τ, ΣΓΡ: ζονςεπτουαλιζατιον, φορμαλ αναλψσις, αλιδατιον, ρεσυρςες, συπερισιον, ωριτινγ – ρειεωινγ ανδ εδιτινγ, ζριτικαλ ρεισιον ανδ αππροαλ οφ της αρτιςλε. ΘΗ: ζονςεπτουαλιζατιον, φορμαλ αναλψσις, αλιδατιον, ρεσυρςες. ΜΤ: αλιδατιον, συπερισιον, ωριτινγ – ρειεωινγ ανδ εδιτινγ, ζριτικαλ ρεισιον ανδ αππροαλ οφ της αρτιςλε.

Δατα Ααιλαβιλιτψ Στατεμεντ:

Δατα ααιλαβλε ον ρεχυεστ δυε το πριαςψ/ετηικαλ ρεστριςτιονς.

Αςκνωωλεδγμεντς : Τηε αυτηορς ωουλδ λιχε το τηανκ Προφ. Δρ. ΄ναψ Βαδηωαρ (Δεπαρτμεντ οφ αρδιοασςυλαρ ανδ Τηοραςις Συργερψ, Ωεστ ΄ργινια ΄νιερσιτψ, Μοργαντωων, Ω΄, ΄ΥΣΑ) φορ προιδινγ ηικς εζεπερτ οπινιον ανδ ζονστρυςτιε φεεδβασκ ιν ιμπροινγ της αρτιςλε.

ΦΙΓΥΡΕ ΛΕΓΕΝΔΣ

Φιγυρε 1. ΠΡΙΣΜΑ (Πρεφερρεδ Ρεπορτινγ Ιτεμς φορ Σψςτεματις Ρειεως ανδ Μετα-αναλψςες) φλωω διαγραμ.

Αββρειατιον: Ρ΄Τ, ρανδομιζεδ ζοντρολλεδ τριαλ.

Φιγυρε 2. Φορεστ πλοτ σηνωινγ της εφφεστ οφ πυλμοναρψ ειν ιςολατιον (Π΄Ι) ανδ δξ-Μαζε προςεδυρε φορ ΑΦ δυρινγ της μιτραλ αλε συργερψ ον 12-μοντη μορταλιτψ ανδ ρεζυρρενςε οφ ΑΦ ιν ρανδομιζεδ ζοντρολλεδ τριαλς.

Αββρειατιονς: ΑΦ, ατριαλ φιβριλλατιον· ΄Ι, ζονφιδενςε ιντεραλ· Μ-Η, Μαντελ–Ηαενςζελ στατιστις· Π΄Ι, πυλμο-ναρψ ειν ιςολατιον.

Ταβλε 1: Δεταιλς οφ στυδιες ινζλυδεδ ιν α σψςτεματις ρειεω. Δατα αρε μεαν±SD, count (%).

Characteristics	Blackstone et al. ²¹	Albrecht et al. ²²	Srivastava et al. ²³	Stulak et al. ²⁴
Year	2019	2009	2008	2014
Country of origin	USA	Brazil	India	USA
Type of study	RCT	RCT	RCT	NRSI

Characteristics	Blackstone et al. ²¹	Albrecht et al. ²²	Srivastava et al. ²³	Stulak et al. ²⁴
Study period	2010-2013	1999-2004	2000-2005	1993-2010
Follow-up, median, m	12	36	44	38
No. of patients				
Cox-Maze	66	20	40	256
PVI	67	20	40	68
Age, mean±SD, y				
Cox-Maze	68.2±10.4	51.7±12.4	37.1±11.1	62
PVI	71.3±10.3	55.1±9.2	40.9±11.4	68
Female gender (%)				
Cox-Maze	42.4	75	52.5	NR
PVI	43.3	70	50	NR
Longstanding persistent AF (%)				
Cox-Maze	54.6	100	100	55
PVI	50.8	100	100	19
XCT, mean±SD, min				
Cox-Maze	107.4±44	78.5±15.9	NR	59±5
PVI	98.4±38.7	74.8±19.2	NR	65±6
CPB time, mean±SD, min				
Cox-Maze	152.4±60.8	123±21	NR	103±7
PVI	143.3±65.9	99.9±23.8	NR	90±8
Rate of MV repair (%)				
Cox-Maze	56.1	55	2.5	NR
PVI	62.7	60	7.5	NR
LAAO (%)				
Cox-Maze	100	100	NR	100
PVI	100	100	NR	70
Recurrence of AF at 12 m (%)				
Cox-Maze	23	15	20	13
PVI	36	10	12.5	30
Mortality at 12 m (%)				
Cox-Maze	6.1	15	10	2
PVI	7.5	5	10	10
Stroke at 12 m (%)				
Cox-Maze	1.5	NR	NR	1
PVI	4.5	NR	NR	1
Follow-up monitoring protocol	Transtelephonic monitoring	ECG	ECG	ECG

*median; Abbreviations: AF=atrial fibrillation, CPB=cardiopulmonary bypass, ECG=electrocardiogram, LAAO=left atrial appendage occlusion, m=month, MV=mitral valve, NR=not reported, NRSI=nonrandomized study, PVI=pulmonary vein isolation, RCT=randomized controlled trial, XCT=cross clamp time

Table 2 . Randomized controlled trials: main characteristics and risk of bias assessment.

Srivastava 2008, India ²³	
General design	Single-center, open-label, enrollment 2000-2005, 5-year follow-up with 3-month intervals; 4 treatment groups
Patients	Age 12-60 years, undergoing MV surgery, no active CAD, no antiarrhythmics, LA [?]6 cm.
Postoperatively	If NSR not achieved: DC or amiodarone.
Declared endpoints	Conversion to NSR, AF free survival at 1-year follow-up.

	Srivastava 2008, India ²³
Patient evaluation	Clinical symptoms, ECG, echo.
Risk of bias	
Randomization	Some concern.
Treatment deviations	Some concern.
Missing outcome data	Low risk.
Other RoB2 biases ¹	Low risk.
Overall risk of bias	Some concerns.

Abbreviations: AAD – antiarrhythmic drugs, AF – atrial fibrillation; CAD – coronary artery disease, DC – direct cardioversion, ECG –electrocardiography, HF – heart failure, NYHA – New Your Heart Association, LA – left atrium, LVEF – left ventricular ejection fraction, NSR – normal sinus rhythm, OR – operating room

¹Other RoB2 biases – measurement of outcomes; selection of reported results

Table 3 . Observational (non-randomized controlled) studies: main characteristics and risk of bias assessment.

	Gillinov 2006, USA ²⁶
Declared objective	Efficacy of treatment for paroxysmal AF with concomitant MV surgery: Cox-Maze III, PVI and PV
Outcomes	Prevalence of AF at 1, 3, 6, 12 months and yearly follow-up.
General design	Retrospective analysis of a single center registry 1993-2004. Cox-Maze III (n=41), PVI (n=31)/PV
Risk of bias	
Confounding	Low-moderate risk. Adjustment: demographic characteristics, NYHA class, MV disease, AF duration
Selection bias	Low risk.
Missing data bias	Low-moderate risk.
Other biases¹	Low risk.
Overall risk of bias	Moderate risk.

Abbreviations: AAD – antiarrhythmic drugs, AF – atrial fibrillation, ECG – electrocardiography, LV – left ventricle, NYHA – New York Heart association, MV – mitral valve, PS – propensity score, PVI –pulmonary vein isolation, RCT – randomized controlled trial

¹Other ROBINS-I biases: misclassification, deviation from intended treatments, measurement of outcomes, selection of reported results

References

1. Badhwar V, Rankin JS, Ad N, et al. Surgical Ablation of Atrial Fibrillation in the United States: Trends and Propensity Matched Outcomes. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2017;104(2):493-500.
2. Stroke Prevention in Atrial Fibrillation Study. Final results. *Circulation*. 1991;84(2):527-539.
3. Badhwar V, Rankin JS, Damiano RJ, Jr., et al. The Society of Thoracic Surgeons 2017 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Surgical Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*.2017;103(1):329-341.
4. Vogt PR, Brunner La Rocca HP, Candinas R, et al. Temporary loss of cardiac autonomic innervation after the maze procedure. *European journal of cardio-thoracic surgery : official journal of the European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery*. 1997;12(1):75-81.

5. Hassanabad AF, Jefferson HL, Shanmugam G, Kent WDT. Atrial fibrillation: Current and emerging surgical strategies. *Journal of cardiac surgery*. 2019;34(11):1305-1320.
6. Hornero F, Rodríguez I, Bueno M, et al. Surgical ablation of permanent atrial fibrillation by means of maze radiofrequency: mid-term results. *Journal of cardiac surgery*. 2004;19(5):383-388.
7. Calkins H, Hindricks G, Cappato R, et al. 2017 HRS/EHRA/ECAS/APHRS/SOLAECE expert consensus statement on catheter and surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation. *Heart rhythm*. 2017;14(10):e275-e444.
8. Cox JL. The first Maze procedure. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2011;141(5):1093-1097.
9. Yui M, Yap CH, Nixon I, Chao V. Modification of the Cox-Maze III procedure using bipolar radiofrequency ablation. *Heart, lung & circulation*. 2007;16(1):37-49.
10. Robertson JO, Saint LL, Leidenfrost JE, Damiano RJ, Jr. Illustrated techniques for performing the Cox-Maze IV procedure through a right mini-thoracotomy. *Annals of cardiothoracic surgery*. 2014;3(1):105-116.
11. Henn MC, Lancaster TS, Miller JR, et al. Late outcomes after the Cox maze IV procedure for atrial fibrillation. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2015;150(5):1168-1176, 1178.e1161-1162.
12. Ad N, Suri RM, Gammie JS, Sheng S, O'Brien SM, Henry L. Surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation trends and outcomes in North America. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2012;144(5):1051-1060.
13. Gillinov AM, Gelijns AC, Parides MK, et al. Surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation during mitral-valve surgery. *The New England journal of medicine*. 2015;372(15):1399-1409.
14. Stewart LA, Clarke M, Rovers M, et al. Preferred Reporting Items for a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Individual Participant Data: The PRISMA-IPD Statement. *JAMA*. 2015;313(16):1657-1665.
15. Sterne JAC, Savović J, Page MJ, et al. RoB 2: a revised tool for assessing risk of bias in randomised trials. 2019;366:14898.
16. Sterne JA, Hernán MA, Reeves BC, et al. ROBINS-I: a tool for assessing risk of bias in non-randomised studies of interventions. 2016;355:i4919.
17. Miettinen O, Nurminen M. Comparative analysis of two rates. *Statistics in medicine*. 1985;4(2):213-226.
18. Balduzzi S, Rücker G, Schwarzer G. How to perform a meta-analysis with R: a practical tutorial. *Evidence-based mental health*. 2019;22(4):153-160.
19. Röver C. Bayesian Random-Effects Meta-Analysis Using the bayesmeta R Package. *Journal of Statistical Software*. 2020;93(6):1 - 51.
20. Schwarzer G. meta: An R package for meta-analysis. 2007;7(3):40-45.
21. Blackstone EH, Chang HL, Rajeswaran J, et al. Batrial maze procedure versus pulmonary vein isolation for atrial fibrillation during mitral valve surgery: New analytical approaches and end points. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2019;157(1):234-243.e239.
22. Albrecht A, Kalil RA, Schuch L, et al. Randomized study of surgical isolation of the pulmonary veins for correction of permanent atrial fibrillation associated with mitral valve disease. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2009;138(2):454-459.
23. Srivastava V, Kumar S, Javali S, et al. Efficacy of three different ablative procedures to treat atrial fibrillation in patients with valvular heart disease: a randomised trial. *Heart, lung & circulation*. 2008;17(3):232-240.
24. Stulak JM, Suri RM, Burkhart HM, et al. Surgical ablation for atrial fibrillation for two decades: are the results of new techniques equivalent to the Cox maze III procedure? *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2014;147(5):1478-1486.

25. Onorati F, Mariscalco G, Rubino AS, et al. Impact of lesion sets on mid-term results of surgical ablation procedure for atrial fibrillation. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 2011;57(8):931-940.
26. Gillinov AM, Bakaeen F, McCarthy PM, et al. Surgery for paroxysmal atrial fibrillation in the setting of mitral valve disease: a role for pulmonary vein isolation? *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2006;81(1):19-26; discussion 27-18.
27. Iribarne A, DiScipio AW, McCullough JN, et al. Surgical Atrial Fibrillation Ablation Improves Long-Term Survival: A Multicenter Analysis. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2019;107(1):135-142.
28. Rankin JS, Grau-Sepulveda MV, Ad N, et al. Associations Between Surgical Ablation and Operative Mortality After Mitral Valve Procedures. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2018;105(6):1790-1796.
29. Mehaffey JH, Charles EJ, Berens M, et al. Barriers to atrial fibrillation ablation during mitral valve surgery. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2021.
30. Ad N, Cheng DC, Martin J, et al. Surgical Ablation for Atrial Fibrillation in Cardiac Surgery: A Consensus Statement of the International Society of Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery (ISMICS) 2009. *Innovations (Phila)*. 2010;5(2):74-83.
31. Joshibayev S, Bolatbekov B. Early and long-term outcomes and quality of life after concomitant mitral valve surgery, left atrial size reduction, and radiofrequency surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation. *Anatol J Cardiol*. 2016;16(10):797-803.
32. Melo J, Santiago T, Aguiar C, et al. Surgery for atrial fibrillation in patients with mitral valve disease: results at five years from the International Registry of Atrial Fibrillation Surgery. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2008;135(4):863-869.
33. Lonnholm S, Blomstrom P, Nilsson L, Oxelbark S, Jideus L, Blomstrom-Lundqvist C. Effects of the maze operation on health-related quality of life in patients with atrial fibrillation. *Circulation*. 2000;101(22):2607-2611.
34. Saint LL, Damiano RJ, Cuculich PS, et al. Incremental risk of the Cox-maze IV procedure for patients with atrial fibrillation undergoing mitral valve surgery. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2013;146(5):1072-1077.
35. Glotzer TV, Hellkamp AS, Zimmerman J, et al. Atrial high rate episodes detected by pacemaker diagnostics predict death and stroke: report of the Atrial Diagnostics Ancillary Study of the MODe Selection Trial (MOST). *Circulation*. 2003;107(12):1614-1619.
36. Prasad SM, Maniar HS, Camillo CJ, et al. The Cox maze III procedure for atrial fibrillation: long-term efficacy in patients undergoing lone versus concomitant procedures. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2003;126(6):1822-1828.
37. Aranda-Michel E, Serna-Gallegos D, Kilic A, et al. The Impact of the Cox-Maze Technique on Freedom From Atrial Fibrillation. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2021;112(5):1417-1423.
38. García-Villarreal OA. The Cox-Maze Procedure: Accuracy and Completeness Do Matter. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*. 2022;113(3):1050.
39. Calkins H, Kuck KH, Cappato R, et al. 2012 HRS/EHRA/ECAS Expert Consensus Statement on Catheter and Surgical Ablation of Atrial Fibrillation: Recommendations for Patient Selection, Procedural Techniques, Patient Management and Follow-up, Definitions, Endpoints, and Research Trial Design: A report of the Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) Task Force on Catheter and Surgical Ablation of Atrial Fibrillation. Developed in partnership with the European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA), a registered branch of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the European Cardiac Arrhythmia Society (ECAS); and in collaboration with the American College of Cardiology (ACC), American Heart Association (AHA), the Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society (APHRS), and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS). Endorsed by the governing bodies

of the American College of Cardiology Foundation, the American Heart Association, the European Cardiac Arrhythmia Society, the European Heart Rhythm Association, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the Asia Pacific Heart Rhythm Society, and the Heart Rhythm Society. *Heart rhythm*.2012;9(4):632-696.e621.

40. Papadimas E, Tan YK, Choong A, Kofidis T, Teoh KLK. Anticoagulation After Isolated Mitral Valve Repair: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Clinical Outcomes. *Heart, lung & circulation*.2021;30(2):247-253.

41. Lauritzen DJ, Vodstrup HJ, Christensen TD, Hald MO, Christensen R, Heiberg J. Discontinuation of anticoagulants after successful surgical ablation of atrial fibrillation. *Journal of cardiac surgery*.2020;35(9):2216-2223.

42. Babokin V, Trofimov N. Prevention of Atrial Fibrillation Recurrence After the Maze IV Procedure. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*.2020;109(5):1624-1625.

43. Lapenna E, De Bonis M, Giambuzzi I, et al. Long-term Outcomes of Stand-Alone Maze IV for Persistent or Long-standing Persistent Atrial Fibrillation. *The Annals of thoracic surgery*.2020;109(1):124-131.

44. Murashita T, Rankin JS, Wei LM, Roberts HG, Alkhouli MA, Badhwar V. Oral anticoagulation may not be necessary for patients discharged in sinus rhythm after the Cox Maze IV procedure. *The Journal of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery*. 2018;155(3):997-1006.



PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram



