Conclusions

- Reducing 30-day readmissions is a major focus of Medicare (CMS).
- CVD-related admissions are subject to special scrutiny, since two of the three initially targeted conditions were CVD-related (heart failure and myocardial infarction).
- We found high rates of readmissions after CVD events: roughly 1 in 3 hospitalizations resulted in a 30-day readmission, with nearly half occurring in the first 10 days.
- The phenomenon of the "post-hospitalization syndrome" was evident, given that a large proportion of readmissions were for non-CVD indications.
- Death rates at 30 days were high overall; CVD admissions seemed to be a frequent cause of elective dialysis withdrawal.
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- Death rates at 30 days were high overall; CVD admissions seemed to be a frequent cause of elective dialysis withdrawal.
- "There were a few cases where the cause of death was not known.

Methods

- Using CMS ESRD data from 2012-13, we created a cohort of prevalent HD patients who were admitted and discharged alive for a CVD event.
- The cases were:
  - acute coronary syndrome
  - arrhythmia
  - cardiomyopathy/CHF
  - stroke
- For the outcomes listed above, percentages for each were calculated at 10 and 30 days.
- Cause of death was ascertained from the ESRD Death Notification Form (CMS-2746).

Table 2

| Table 2 | Roughly 43% of 30-day readmissions were for a CVD event, most were for non-CVD indications. |

Table 3

| Table 3 | Slightly over half of 30-day deaths were attributed to cardiac causes. Withdrawal was the cause of death in more than 1 in 8 cases. In fully 1 in 5 cases, cause of death was unknown. |

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