

# What is the ideal route of administration of tranexamic acid in total knee arthroplasty? A meta-analysis based on randomized controlled trials

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**Background:** Tranexamic acid (TXA) was conducive in total knee arthroplasty (TKA) to reduce blood loss and transfusion demand. The purpose of this meta-analysis was to assess the efficacy and safety of different administration of TXA in primary TKA.

**Methods:** Database PubMed, Medline, Web of Science and Embase were searched. The relative risks (RRs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated to analysis dichotomous outcomes. The mean differences (MD) with 95% CIs were calculated to analysis dichotomous outcomes. Data was analyzed using RevMan 5.3.

**Results:** Twenty-eight randomized controlled trials (RCTs) studies were included in this meta-analysis involving a total of 4,200 participants. There were no obvious differences between oral, intravenous or topical TXA group in total blood loss (intravenous *vs.* topical: MD =11.55, 95% CI, -10.23 to 33.34, oral *vs.* intravenous or topical: MD =-52.25, 95% CI, -121.28 to 16.78), transfusion rate (intravenous *vs.* topical: RR =1.04, 95% CI, 0.64 to 1.69, oral *vs.* intravenous or topical: RR =0.75, 95% CI, 0.36 to 1.54), incidence of venous thrombotic events (VTE) (intravenous *vs.* topical: RR =1.43, 95% CI, 0.81 to 2.54). The topical TXA administration had significantly increased postoperative hemoglobin (HB) level compared with the intravenous TXA administration (MD =-0.37, 95% CIs, -0.47 to -0.26). In the combined group, the total blood loss (MD =-119.58, 95% CI, -181.68 to -57.49) and postoperative HB level (MD =0.54, 95% CI, 0.45 to 0.64) were more acceptable than the single-route group.

**Conclusions:** Combined administration of TXA can reduce total blood loss, postoperative HB drop compared with intravenous, topical or oral TXA alone. Oral administration of TXA is similar to intravenous or topical TXA use alone.

Keywords: Total knee arthroplasty (TKA); tranexamic acid (TXA); meta-analysis

Submitted Sep 15, 2020. Accepted for publication Nov 06, 2020. doi: 10.21037/apm-20-1857 View this article at: http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/apm-20-1857

## Introduction

Total knee arthroplasty (TKA) was a common method for the treatment of elderly patients with end-stage knee osteoarthritis. However, average blood loss after TKA has been noted to range from 500–1,500 mL, resulting in about 40–50% of the patients undergoing TKA unavoidably experience postoperative anemia (1,2).

In the past two decades, the role of Tranexamic acid (TXA) in TKA has been a concern and the application of TXA also been studied a lot to limit the rate of blood loss and transfusion (3-5). Previous studies have indicated that TXA was related to the significant reduction of blood loss and transfusion demand (6,7). In addition, previous studies also indicated that oral and intravenous TXA had similar hemostatic effect (8,9). And relevant studies have shown that patients receiving combined topical and intravenous TXA benefit more than patients receiving a single route of TXA (10,11). In particular, surgeons have been worried about the occurrence of venous thromboembolism (VTE) in high-risk patients using TXA. Recently, some new randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been carried out to study this problem. Therefore, we conducted this meta-analysis to discuss the efficacy and safety of different TXA administration methods with regard to blood loss, postoperative hemoglobin (HB) level, the incidence of VTE and blood transfusion.

This meta-analysis was conducted according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (available at http:// dx.doi.org/10.21037/apm-20-1857) (12).

# Methods

#### Literature search strategy

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (as revised in 2013). This metaanalysis does not require the approval of the ethics committee. Literature search was conducted by using the electronic databases PubMed, Medline, Web of Science and Embase (last search was updated on March 31, 2020). The following keywords were used to search the data base: ("TKA" OR "Total knee arthroplasty") AND ("tranexamic acid" OR "TXA") AND ("randomized controlled trials" OR "RCT"). The included literatures must be written in English.

# Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: (I) RCTs; (II) patients: underwent TKA (III) groups including topical TXA, intravenous TXA, oral TXA or combination; (IV) complete outcome data. Reviews, case reports, biochemical studies, letters, and conference abstracts were excluded.

# Data extraction

All data were extracted by two independent researchers according to the criteria. A data extraction table was provided including the year of publication, first author's name, simple sizes, mean ages, male (%), comparison types, Intravenous regimen, topical regimen, oral regimen, surgery, tourniquet use, calculation method of blood loss, time of postoperative evaluation of Hb, evaluation method of VTE and the indications of blood transfusion.

# Study quality assessment

Study quality assessment was conducted by using the Cochrane Collaboration's tool to assess the risk of bias. This tool was conducted by the following 6 items: sequence generation, allocation concealment, blinding of participants, personnel and outcome assessors, incomplete outcome data, selective outcome reporting, and other sources of bias. The results were classified into three grades: "low risk, middle risk, and high risk".

# Statistical analysis

The relative risks (RRs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were calculated to analysis dichotomous outcomes. The mean differences (MD) with 95% CIs were calculated to analysis dichotomous outcomes. The P value of Q statistic test and I<sup>2</sup> statistic were used to assess statistical heterogeneity (13). A random effects model was applied If I<sup>2</sup><50% and P value lower than 0.10. Subgroup analysis was carried out according to the following variables: surgery (bilateral TKA or unilateral TKA), topical dose ( $\geq$ 3 or <3 g), intravenous dose ( $\geq$ 3 or <3 g), tourniquet (use or not use), region (Asia, Europe or North America). Publication bias was assessed by using funnel plot. Sensitivity analysis determines the impact on heterogeneity testing by eliminating each study in turn, and evaluates the stability of the overall results. All statistical analyses were conducted

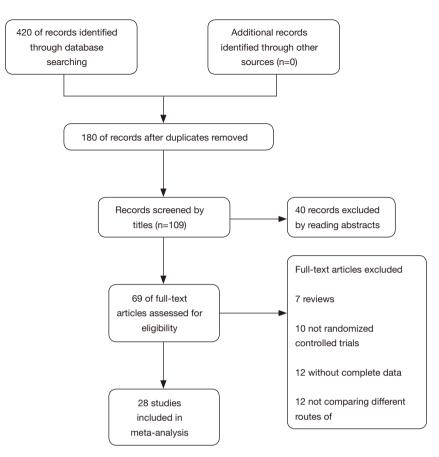


Figure 1 Flowchart of the literature search and selection for the present study.

in Review Manager Software (RevMan version 5.3, the Cochrane Collaboration, Copenhagen, Denmark).

# **Results**

#### Characteristics of the included studies

A total of 420 records were retrieved from the database, and 180 remained after eliminating duplicate documents. Then, 109 records were screened by titles, and 40 records were excluded after reviewing the abstracts. We reviewed the full text of the remaining 69 records and excluded 41 citations for reasons such as reviews, not RCTs and without sufficient data (*Figure 1*). Finally, we identified 28 RCTs studies in this meta-analysis and involved a total of 4,200 participants. Study quality assessment and other features of the included studies were shown in *Tables 1,2*.

#### Topical versus intravenous route

#### **Blood loss**

Twelve studies involving 1,260 patients that reported blood loss were included. No significant difference was observed in the total blood loss (MD, 11.55; 95% CI, -10.23 to 33.34; P=0.30; I<sup>2</sup>=28.0%; fixed effect model) between intravenous TXA administration and topical administration (*Figure 2A*).

#### Postoperative HB level

Twelve studies involving 1,309 patients that reported postoperative HB level were included. The data showed that the topical TXA administration had significant increased postoperative HB level compared with the intravenous TXA administration (MD, -0.37; 95% CI, -0.47 to -0.26; P<0.001; I<sup>2</sup>=34.0%; fixed effect model) (*Figure 2B*).

Table 1 Study characteristics and patient demographic details	cteristics	and patient dem	ographic d	letails								
Author	Year	Region	Sample size	Mean age (year)	Male (%)	Comparison types	Intravenous	Topical	Oral	Surgery	Tourniquet	Risk of bias
Tsukada (10)	2019	Japan	77	76	21	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> combined	1 g+1 g	1 g	N/A	Bilateral TKA	No	Low
King (14)	2019	Australia	53	65	49	Oral vs. combined	1 g	3 G	3 0 3	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Wang (15)	2019	China	118	64	22	Intravenous vs. oral	20 mg/kg	1 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Zhang (16)	2019	China	150	62	25	Intravenous vs. topical vs. combined	20 mg/kg	3 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	oN	Low
Meshram (17)	2020	Korea	309	69	9	topical <i>vs.</i> combined	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	2 g	N/A	Bilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Wang (18)	2018	China	180	64	27	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical <i>v</i> s. oral	20 mg/kg	2 g	2 g	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Cao (19)	2018	China	118	65	19	Intravenous vs. oral	20 mg/kg+1 g	N/A	2 g	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Abdel (20)	2018	NSA	640	66	41	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	1 g+1 g	3 G	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Kim (21)	2018	Korean	308	70	5	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> combined	1 g	2 g	N/A	Bilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Wei (22)	2018	China	64	66	47	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	10 mg/kg	1 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Prakash (11)	2018	Korea	150	20	14	Intravenous vs. topical vs. combined	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Wang (23)	2018	China	147	64	22	Topical vs. oral	N/A	3 G	4 g	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Subramanyam (24)	2018	India	182	63	67	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	10 mg/kg	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Yen (25)	2017	Taiwan	63	70	27	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	1 g	3 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
George (26)	2018	India	113	64	34	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Table 1 (continued)												

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Table 1 (continued)												
Author	Year	Region	Sample size	Mean age (year)	Male (%)	Comparison types	Intravenous	Topical	Oral	Surgery	Tourniquet	Risk of bias
Lacko (27)	2018	Slovakia	60	68	42	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	3 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Wang (28)	2017	China	100	68	28	Intravenous <i>v</i> s. topical	1 g	1 0	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Stowers (29)	2017	New Zealand 111		70	50	Intravenous vs. topical	1.5 g	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Lee (30)	2017	Korea	376	73	ø	Intravenous vs. topical vs. combined	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	2 G	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Cankaya (31)	2017	Turkey	100	66	16	Topical vs. oral	N/A	1.5 g	25 mg/kg	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Tzatzairis (32)	2016	Greece	80	70	20	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	1g	1 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
May (33)	2016	NSA	131	64	22	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	1 g+1 g	2 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Song (34)	2017	Korea	150	70	14	Intravenous vs. topical vs. combined	10 mg/kg+10 mg/kg	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Nielsen (35)	2016	NSA	60	65	47	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> combined	1 g	1 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Fillingham (36)	2016	NSA	71	63	34	Intravenous vs. oral	1 g	N/A	1.95 g	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Aggarwal (37)	2016	India	20	58	64	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	15 mg/kg+15 mg/kg	15 mg/ kg	N/A	Bilateral TKA	Yes	Low
Jain (38)	2016	India	119	69	37	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> combined	1 g mg/kg+10 mg/kg	2 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	No	Low
Chen (39)	2016	Singapore	100	65	25	Intravenous <i>vs.</i> topical	1.5 g	1.5 g	N/A	Unilateral TKA	Yes	Low
N/A, not available.												

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Table 2	Study chara	cteristic

Author	Year	Calculation method of blood loss	Time of postoperative evaluation of Hb	Evaluation method of VTE	Indications of blood transfusion
Tsukada (10)	2019	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 3	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 70 g/L and 100 g/L in symptomatic patients
King (14)	2019	The volume of theatre and drain blood loss	Postoperative day 2	Clinical	Hb <80 g/L
Wang (15)	2019	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 3	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 70 g/L and 100 g/L in symptomatic patients
Zhang (16)	2019	The fluid in the aspirator plus the weight gain of the hemostatic cloth	Postoperative day 3	Clinical	N/A
Meshram (17)	2020	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 5	Ultrasound	Hb <70 g/L or Hb between 70 g/L and 80 g/L with anemic symptoms
Wang (18)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 3	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients organ dysfunction patients
Cao (19)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 3	N/A	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 70 g/L and 100 g/L in symptomatic patients
Abdel (20)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 1	Clinical	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients <100 g/L anemic symptoms
Kim (21)	2018	The volume of blood in suction drains and weighing the swabs used	Postoperative day 2	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients >70 g/L with anemic symptoms
Wei (22)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 1,2,4	N/A	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients Hb <100 g/L in symptomatic patients
Prakash (11)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 1,2,4,7	Clinical	Hb <80 g/L
Wang (23)	2018	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 3	Clinical and ultrasound	Hb <70 g/L
Subramanyam (24)	2018	Formula from Nadler and Sehat	Postoperative day 3	Ultrasound	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 80 g/L and 100 g/L in symptomatic patients
Yen (25)	2017	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 2,4	Clinical	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 80 g/L and 90 g/L in symptomatic patients
George (26)	2018	Calculated intraoperatively	Postoperative day 3	Ultrasound	Hb <70 g/L
Lacko (27)	2018	In drainage	Postoperative day 2	Ultrasound	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients <90 g/L in symptomatic patients
Wang (28)	2017	Formula from Nadler and Sehat	Postoperative day 2	Ultrasound	Hb <60 g/L in asymptomatic patients >60 g/L in symptomatic patients
Stowers (29)	2017	Formula described by Good	Postoperative day 1, 2, 3	Clinical	Hb <80 g/L in asymptomatic patients <100 g/L in symptomatic patients

Table 2 (continued)

Author	Year	Calculation method of blood loss	Time of postoperative evaluation of Hb	Evaluation method of VTE	Indications of blood transfusion
Lee (30)	2017	Formula described by Good and Nadler	Postoperative day 5	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 70 g/L and 80 g/L in symptomatic patients
Cankaya (31)	2017	Formula from Gross	Postoperative day 2	Clinical	Hb <85 g/L in asymptomatic patients or symptomatic patients
Tzatzairis (32)	2016	Formula from Nadler and Sehat	Postoperative day 1, 2, 4	Ultrasound	Hb <100 g/L in or any symptomatic patients
May (33)	2016	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 1, 2, 3	Clinical	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or <100 g/L anemic symptoms
Song (34)	2017	Formula from Gross and Nadler	Postoperative day 1, 2, 4	Ultrasound	Hb <80 g/L
Nielsen (35)	2016	Formula from Gross and Nadler	Postoperative day 2	Clinical	Hb <75 g/L in asymptomatic patients or <100 g/L anemic symptoms
Fillingham (36)	2016	Formula from Gross and Nadler	N/A	N/A	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or >70 g/L in symptomatic patients
Aggarwal (37)	2016	Formula from Good and Nadler	Postoperative day 3	N/A	Hb <80 g/L
Jain (38)	2016	Formula from Nadler	N/A	Ultrasound	Hb <70 g/L in asymptomatic patients or between 70 g/L and 80 g/L in symptomatic patients
Chen (39)	2016	Formula from Nadler	Postoperative day 4	Ultrasound	Hb <80 g/L

Table 2 (continued)

N/A, not available; Hb, hemoglobin; VTE, venous thrombotic events.

# VTE rate

Nine studies involving 1,547 patients that reported VTE rate were included. No significant difference was observed in the VTE rate (RR, 1.43; 95% CI, 0.81 to 2.54; P=0.22; I<sup>2</sup>=0%; fixed effect model) between topical TXA administration and intravenous administration (*Figure 2C*).

# Transfusion rate

Fourteen studies involving 1,536 patients that reported transfusion rate were included in the analysis. No significant difference was observed in the transfusion rate (RR, 1.04; 95% CI, 0.64 to 1.69; P=0.88;  $I^2$ =7%; fixed effect model) between intravenous TXA administration and topical administration (*Figure 2D*).

# Oral vs. intravenous or topical

# **Blood loss**

Four studies that reported blood loss were included in this

analysis. Two studies involving 191 patients compared oral TXA with intravenous TXA and two studies involving 267 patients compared oral TXA with topical TXA. No significant difference was observed in the total blood loss between oral TXA administration and intravenous or topical administration (*vs.* intravenous: MD, -27.61; 95% CI, -129.69 to 74.47; P=0.60; *vs.* topical: MD, -73.01; 95% CI, -166.71 to 20.69; P=0.13) (*Figure 3A*).

# Postoperative HB level

Five studies that reported postoperative HB level were included in this analysis. Three studies involving 471 patients compared oral TXA with intravenous TXA and two studies involving 267 patients compared oral TXA with topical TXA. No significant difference was observed in the postoperative HB level between oral TXA administration and intravenous or topical administration (*vs.* intravenous: MD, -0.02; 95% CI, -0.07 to 0.12, P=0.61; *vs.* topical: MD, 0.21; 95% CI, -0.09 to 0.52; P=0.67) (*Figure 3B*).

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Study or Subgroup

Chen2016

George2018

Prakash2018

Lacko2018

May2017

Song2017

Wang2017

Wang2018

Yen2018

Stower2017

Tzatzairis2017

Total (95% CI)

Study or Subgroup

Aggarwal2016

George2018

Lee2017

Mav2017

Subramanyam2018

Intravenous

268

111 51

Intravenous

1.47

SD Total

30 600 200

50 1.198 356 50

50 998

40 1,205 300

60 1,059 422 60 2.2%

627

Mean SD Total Mean

35

55

93 -2.4 0.8 93 19.5%

Mean

730 195 50 799 268

661 124 55 672 136

580 220

806 368 69 835 318

972

749

571 119 91 565 222 91 17.7%

919 328 50 770 237

. 921 252 31 795 231

Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 15.28, df = 11 (P = 0.17); l<sup>2</sup> = 28%

9.66

-2.9 0.9

> 11 1.2 69

-1.77 1.04

Test for overall effect: Z = 1.04 (P = 0.30)

1,236 307

1,108 392

1.208 368 tropic

256

103 60

tropic

10.3

11.2

-1.52 0.69

SD

1.2 62

1.11

50 5.6%

58 20.6%

30 4.2%

62 3.4%

50

40

50

32 3.3%

633 100.0%

2.4%

4.5%

2.7%

3.8%

Total Weight

3.1%

6.9%

35

58 10.9%

29.5%

Mean SD otal Weight

723

Α

В

Mean Difference	Mean Difference
IV, Fixed, 95% CI	IV, Fixed, 95% Cl
-69.00 [-160.87, 22.87]	
-11.00 [-58.95, 36.95]	
-20.00 [-126.39, 86.39]	
-29.00 [-146.49, 88.49]	
10.00 [-131.92, 151.92]	
-26.00 [-128.73, 76.73]	
26.00 [-14.09, 66.09]	+
6.00 [-45.75, 57.75]	
31.00 [-102.02, 164.02]	
149.00 [36.83, 261.17]	
49.00 [-96.74, 194.74]	
126.00 [6.52, 245.48]	
120.00 [0.02, 240.40]	
11.55 [-10.23, 33.34]	
	-200 -100 0 100 200
	Favours [topical] Favours [Intravenous]
Mean Difference	Mean Difference
ht IV, Fixed, 95% CI	IV, Fixed, 95% Cl
% -0.64 [-1.25, -0.03]	
% -0.25 [-0.58, 0.08]	
% -0.50 [-0.74, -0.26]	_ <b>_</b>
% -0.20 [-0.61, 0.21]	<b>_</b>
-0.20 [-0.01, 0.21]	

							01	0.0 /0	0.2010.01,0.2		
	Song2017	11.1	1.2	50	11.5	1.2	50	5.3%	-0.40 [-0.87, 0.0	07]	
	Subramanyam2018	-1.7	1	91	-1.6	0.9	91 1	5.3%	-0.10 [-0.38, 0.1	18]	
	Tzatzairis2017	10.3	1.06	40	10.8	1.08	40	5.3%	-0.50 [-0.97, -0.0	03]	
	Wang2017	10.7	1.2	50	11.3	0.85	50	7.0%	-0.60 [-1.01, -0.1	19]	
	Wang2018	10.2	1.11	60	10.4	1.13	60	7.3%	-0.20 [-0.60, 0.2	20]	
	Wei2018	-2.84	0.68	32	-2.66	0.6	32 1	1.8%	-0.18 [-0.49, 0.1	13]	
	Yen2018	10.46	1.27	31	11.28	1.26	32	3.0%	-0.82 [-1.44, -0.2	20]	
	Zhang2019	10.7	1.26	50	11.6	1.27	50	4.7%	-0.90 [-1.40, -0.4	40]	
	Total (95% CI)			656			653 10	00.0%	-0.37 [-0.47, -0.2	26]	◆
	Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> =	16.68, di	f = 11 (P	= 0.1	2); <b> </b> ² = 3	34%				-	
	Test for overall effect:	Z = 6.65	(P < 0.0	0001	)					-2	-1 U 1 2 Favours [tropic] Favours [Intravenous]
											Favours (ropic) Favours (intravenous)
С		Intra	venous		trop	ic			Risk Ratio		Risk Ratio
C	Study or Subgroup	Even					Moight		I. Fixed. 95% Cl		M-H. Fixed, 95% Cl
	Abdel2018	LVCI		20	2	320	10.8%		50 [0.49, 12.79]		
	May2017		4	20 69	2	62	11.4%		.80 [0.34, 9.47]		
	,		2		4						
	Prakash2018		3	50	1	50	5.4%	5 3.0	00 [0.32, 27.87]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017		1	50 51	1	50 60	5.4% 10.0%	6 3.1 6 C	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018		3 1 0	50 51 91	1	50 60 91	5.4% 10.0% 8.1%	63.1 60	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017		1	50 51 91 50	1 2 1 1	50 60 91 50	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4%	6 3.0 6 C 6 C 6 1.0	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018		1	50 51 91 50 60	1 2 1 1 0	50 60 91 50 60	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7%	5 3,1 5 C 5 C 5 1,1 5 3,1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017		1	50 51 91 50	1 2 1 1	50 60 91 50	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4%	5 3,1 5 C 5 C 5 1,1 5 3,1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018		1	50 51 91 50 60	1 2 1 1 0	50 60 91 50 60	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7%	5 3.1 5 C 5 C 5 1.1 5 3.1 5 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018 Yen2018		1 0 1 1 1 9	50 51 91 50 60 31	1 2 1 1 0 0	50 60 91 50 60 32 50	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7% 2.7%	6 3.1 6 C 6 C 6 1.1 6 3.1 6 3.1 6 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20] 09 [0.13, 73.17]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018 Yen2018 Zhang2019		1 0 1 1 1 9	50 51 91 50 60 31 50	1 2 1 1 0 0	50 60 91 50 60 32 50	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7% 2.7% 43.4%	6 3.1 6 C 6 C 6 1.1 6 3.1 6 3.1 6 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20] 09 [0.13, 73.17] .13 [0.47, 2.68]		
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018 Yen2018 Zhang2019 Total (95% CI) Total events		1 0 1 1 9 7 25	50 51 91 50 60 31 50 <b>72</b>	1 2 1 0 8 17	50 60 91 50 60 32 50 <b>775</b>	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7% 2.7% 43.4%	6 3.1 6 C 6 C 6 1.1 6 3.1 6 3.1 6 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20] 09 [0.13, 73.17] .13 [0.47, 2.68]	L	
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018 Yen2018 Zhang2019 Total (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi₹=	= 3.08, d	1 0 1 1 9 7 25 If = 8 (P	50 51 91 50 60 31 50 <b>72</b> = 0.9	1 2 1 1 0 8 8 17 33); F=	50 60 91 50 60 32 50 <b>775</b>	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7% 2.7% 43.4%	6 3.1 6 C 6 C 6 1.1 6 3.1 6 3.1 6 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20] 09 [0.13, 73.17] .13 [0.47, 2.68]	L	
	Prakash2018 Stower2017 Subramanyam2018 Wang2017 Wang2018 Yen2018 Zhang2019 Total (95% CI) Total events	= 3.08, d	1 0 1 1 9 7 25 If = 8 (P	50 51 91 50 60 31 50 <b>72</b> = 0.9	1 2 1 1 0 8 8 17 33); F=	50 60 91 50 60 32 50 <b>775</b>	5.4% 10.0% 8.1% 5.4% 2.7% 2.7% 43.4%	6 3.1 6 C 6 C 6 1.1 6 3.1 6 3.1 6 3.1	00 [0.32, 27.87] 0.59 [0.05, 6.30] 0.33 [0.01, 8.08] 00 [0.06, 15.55] 00 [0.12, 72.20] 09 [0.13, 73.17] .13 [0.47, 2.68]	L	0.1 10 1000 Favours [tropic] Favours [Intravenous]

D **Risk Ratio** Risk Ratio Intravenous tropic M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl Study or Subgroup Events Total ents Total Weight M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl Abdel2018 4 60 2 60 6.7% 2.00 [0.38, 10.51] Aggarwal2016 7 35 0 35 1.7% 15.00 [0.89, 252.96] George2018 0 55 3 58 11.4% 0.15 [0.01, 2.85] Lacko2018 2 30 6 30 20.1% 0.33 [0.07, 1.52] Lee2017 Π 93 Π 93 Not estimable May2017 1 69 0 62 1.8% 2.70 [0.11, 65.09] Prakash2018 4 50 5 50 16.8% 0.80 [0.23, 2.81] Song2017 Π 50 1 50 5.0% 0.33 [0.01, 7.99] Stower2017 0 51 60 4.6% 0.39 [0.02, 9.39] 1 Subramanyam2018 Π 91 0 91 Not estimable Tzatzairis2017 5 40 7 40 23.5% 0.71 [0.25, 2.06] Wang2017 1 50 0 50 1.7% 3.00 [0.13, 71.92] Wang2018 4 60 2 60 6.7% 2.00 [0.38, 10.51] Yen2018 0 31 0 32 Not estimable Total (95% CI) 765 771 100.0% 1.04 [0.64, 1.69] Total events 28 27 Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 10.71, df = 10 (P = 0.38); l<sup>2</sup> = 7% 0.005 10 200 0.1 Test for overall effect: Z = 0.15 (P = 0.88) Favours [tropic] Favours [Intravenous]

Figure 2 Forest plot between intravenous and topical tranexamic acid (A) blood loss. (B) Hemoglobin level. (C) venous thrombotic events rate. (D) transfusion rate.

A		ral		intraven	-			Mean Difference	Mean Difference
Study or Subgroup		SD	Total	Mean	SD	Total	Weight	IV, Fixed, 95%	6 CI IV, Fixed, 95% CI
2.2.1 oral vs intrave			~ ~				~~ ~~		
Fillingham2016	1,281		34	1,231	353	37	22.8%	50.00 [-94.47, 194	
Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI)	1,003	414	60 94	1,108	392	60 97	22.9% 45.7%	-105.00 [-249.26, 39	
	- 2 24 46-	4 (D		12 - 550		97	45.7%	-27.61 [-129.69, 74.	47]
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :				1-= 22%					
Test for overall effec	t.∠= 0.53 (	(P = 0	.60)						
2.2.2 oral vs topical									
Wang D2018	788	240	74	070	202	70	22.00	04.001.004.04.06	241
Wang2018	1,003			872	393 422	73 60	21.3%	-84.00 [-204.21, 36	
Subtotal (95% CI)	1,003	414	134	1,059	422	133	54.3%	-56.00 [-205.58, 93 -73.01 [-166.71, 20.	
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :	- 0 00 df-	1 /D		12 - 0%		155	J4.J/0	-75.01[-100.71, 20.	•
Test for overall effect				1 - 0 %					
restion overall ellec		(1 - 0	.13)						
Total (95% CI)			228			230	100.0%	-52.25 [-121.28, 16.	781 🔶
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :	= 2.71. df =	3 (P		l <sup>2</sup> = 0%					
Test for overall effect									-500 -250 0 250 500
Test for subaroup di				df = 1 (P =	0.52).	I²=0%			Favours [oral] Favours [control]
		ral		intraven	oueto	aical		Mean Difference	Mean Difference
Study or Subgroup			Total				Mojaht	IV, Fixed, 95% Cl	IV, Fixed, 95% Cl
2.1.1 oral vs topical		30	Total	Medii	30	TUC	anciditt.	14, TIACU, 5370 CI	IV, HAGG, 9570 CI
Wang D2018		1.3	74	10.9	1.2	73	4 0 %	0.30 [-0.10, 0.70]	
Wang2018	10.5		60	10.5	1.13	60		0.10 [-0.36, 0.56]	<b>_</b>
Subtotal (95% CI)	10.0	1.41	134	10.4	1.10	133		0.21 [-0.09, 0.52]	
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :	= 0.41. df =	1 (P		$ ^{2} = 0\%$				,	
Test for overall effect									
		•							
2.1.2 oral vs introve	nous								
Fillingham2016	-3.45	0.93	34	-3.31	0.95	37	4.2%	-0.14 [-0.58, 0.30]	
Wang2018	10.5	1.41	60	10.2	1.11	60	3.9%	0.30 [-0.15, 0.75]	
Yuan2017	-2.9	0.43	140	-2.92	0.41	140		0.02 [-0.08, 0.12]	<b>*</b>
Subtotal (95% CI)			234			237	91.2%	0.02 [-0.07, 0.12]	<b>•</b>
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :	= 1.97, df =	2 (P :	= 0.37)	I <sup>2</sup> = 0%					
Test for overall effect	t: Z = 0.51 (	(P = 0	.61)						
Total (95% CI)			368			370	100.0%	0.04 [-0.05, 0.13]	
Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> :				l <sup>2</sup> = 0%				-	-1 -0.5 0 0.5 1
Test for overall effect	and the second second second			16 A (D	0.05		~		Favours (experimental) Favours (control)
Test for subaroup di	πerences:	Chi*=	= 1.34.1	at=1 (P=	0.25).	r= 25.6	%		
	ога	al	int	avenous	/topica	l I		Risk Ratio	Risk Ratio
Study or Subgroup	Events	Tot	al	Events	То	tal We	ight M-	H, Fixed, 95% Cl	
2.5.1 oral vs intrave	LACIUS		.ui					THE TROUG DO NOT	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
2.0.1 oral vo indiav			a						M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016			34	1			i.0% 1	.09 [0.07, 16.73]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018	enous	2 1	34 60			37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 <b>Subtotal (95% Cl)</b>	enous 1	2 1	34	1 4		37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 <b>Subtotal (95% CI)</b> Total events	enous 1 2 3	2 (	34 60 94	1 4 5		37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 <b>Subtotal (95% CI)</b> Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>z</sup>	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df	2 ( 9 9 = 1 (F	34 60 94 P = 0.63	1 4 5		37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 <b>Subtotal (95% CI)</b> Total events	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df	2 ( 9 9 = 1 (F	34 60 94 P = 0.63	1 4 5		37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 <b>Subtotal (95% CI)</b> Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>a</sup> Test for overall effec	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df t: Z = 0.68	2 ( 9 9 = 1 (F	34 60 94 P = 0.63	1 4 5		37 6 60 25	5.0%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>a</sup> Test for overall effect <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b>	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df ct: Z = 0.68	2 ( 9 = 1 (F (P =	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49)	1 4 3); I² = 0%		37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> (	i.0% <b>).9</b> % (	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b>	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect 2.5.2 oral vs topica Wang D2018	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df t: Z = 0.68 I 7	? ( 9 = 1 (F + (P =	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74	1 4 3); I≈ = 0% 9		37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> ( 73 56	5.0% <b>).9</b> %	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect 2.5.2 oral vs topica Wang D2018 Wang2018	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df ct: Z = 0.68	2 ( 9 = 1 (F + (P =	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74 60	1 4 3); I² = 0%		37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	i.0% <b>).9%</b> ).6% 2.5%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec 2.5.2 or al vs topica Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI)	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df ct: Z = 0.68 I 7 2	2 (P = 1 (F (P = 2 ( 13	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74	1 4 3); I² = 0% 9 2		37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	i.0% <b>).9%</b> ).6% 2.5%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec 2.5.2 oral vs topica Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events	enous 1 2 3 3 = 0.23, df 5 t: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9	2 (P = 1 (P + (P = 	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74 60 34	1 4 3); I <sup>2</sup> = 0% 9 2 11	1	37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	i.0% <b>).9%</b> ).6% 2.5%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>27</sup> Test for overall effec 2.5.2 oral vs topica Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>27</sup>	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df: ct: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df	2 (P 3 4 (P = 7 ; 2 (2 13 3) = 1 (F	34 60 94 9- 0.49) 74 60 34 2 = 0.81	1 4 3); I <sup>2</sup> = 0% 9 2 11	1	37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	i.0% <b>).9%</b> ).6% 2.5%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec 2.5.2 oral vs topica Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df: ct: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df	2 (P 3 4 (P = 7 ; 2 (2 13 3) = 1 (F	34 60 94 9- 0.49) 74 60 34 2 = 0.81	1 4 3); I <sup>2</sup> = 0% 9 2 11	1	37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	i.0% <b>).9%</b> ).6% 2.5%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b> Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df: ct: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df	2 (P = 1 (F (P = 2 ( 1 = 1 (F (P =	34 60 94 94 0.49) 74 60 34 9 = 0.81 0.62)	1 4 3); I <sup>2</sup> = 0% 9 2 11	1	37 6 60 26 97 30 73 56 60 12 33 69	5.0% 0.9% 6.6% 2.5% 9.1%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87] <b>0.81 [0.35, 1.87]</b>	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b> Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% CI) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effec Total (95% CI)	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df t: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df t: Z = 0.49	2 ( 9 3) 4 (P = 11 4 (P = 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11	34 60 94 9- 0.49) 74 60 34 2 = 0.81	1 4 3); I² = 0% 9 2 11 1); I² = 0%	1	37 6 60 25 <b>97 3</b> 73 56 60 12	5.0% 0.9% 6.6% 2.5% 9.1%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87]	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b> Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>Total (95% Cl)</b> Total events	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df t: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df t: Z = 0.49 t: Z = 0.49	2 ( 9 3 4 (P= (P= 13 2 2 2 2	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74 60 34 9 = 0.81 0.62) 28	1 4 3); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 9 2 1); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 16	1	37 6 60 26 97 30 73 56 60 12 33 69	5.0% 0.9% 6.6% 2.5% 9.1%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87] <b>0.81 [0.35, 1.87]</b>	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b> Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>Total (95% Cl)</b> Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup>	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df f: z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df ct: Z = 0.49 12 = 0.39, df	; (P = ; 22; ; = 3 (F	34 60 94 9 = 0.63 0.49) 74 60 34 9 = 0.84 0.62) 28 9 = 0.94	1 4 3); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 9 2 1); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 16	1	37 6 60 26 97 30 73 56 60 12 33 69	5.0% 0.9% 6.6% 2.5% 9.1%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87] <b>0.81 [0.35, 1.87]</b>	
Fillingham2016 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>2.5.2 oral vs topica</b> Wang D2018 Wang2018 Subtotal (95% Cl) Total events Heterogeneity: Chi <sup>2</sup> Test for overall effect <b>Total (95% Cl)</b> Total events	enous 1 2 3 = 0.23, df: t: Z = 0.68 1 7 2 9 = 0.06, df: t: Z = 0.49 12 = 0.39, df: t: Z = 0.79	; (P= ; (P= ; (P= ; (P= ; (P= ; (P= ; (P= ; 22; ; (P= ; (P=	34 60 94 94 74 60 34 $9 = 0.8^{\circ}$ 0.62 28 $9 = 0.9^{\circ}$ 0.43	1 4 3); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 9 2 1); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0% 16 4); I <sup>≠</sup> = 0%	1	37 6 60 25 97 30 73 56 60 12 33 69 30 10	5.6% 2.5% 9.1%	.09 [0.07, 16.73] 0.50 [0.10, 2.63] <b>0.61 [0.15, 2.48]</b> 0.77 [0.30, 1.95] 1.00 [0.15, 6.87] <b>0.81 [0.35, 1.87]</b>	M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl

Figure 3 Forest plot between oral and intravenous or topical tranexamic acid (A) blood loss. (B) Hemoglobin level. (C) transfusion rate.

#### Transfusion rate

Four studies reported transfusion rate were included in this analysis. Two studies involving 191 patients compared oral TXA with intravenous TXA and two studies involving 267 patients compared oral TXA with topical TXA. No significant difference was observed in the transfusion rate between oral TXA administration and intravenous or topical administration (*vs.* intravenous: RR, 0.61; 95% CI, 0.15 to 2.48; P=0.49; *vs.* topical: RR, 0.81; 95% CI, 0.35 to 1.87; P=0.62) (*Figure 3C*).

#### Combined vs. single route

# **Blood loss**

Fourteen studies were included in this analysis. Nine studies involving 1,188 patients compared combined TXA route with intravenous TXA and five studies involving 774 patients compared combined TXA route with topical TXA. The results showed that the combined route had significantly decreased total blood loss (MD, -199.58; 95% CI, -181.68 to -57.49; P<0.001; I<sup>2</sup>=86%) compared with the single regimen. Compared with the intravenous (MD, -134.00; 95% CI, 228.10 to -39.89; P<0.05) or topical route (MD, -93.52; 95% CI, -157.44 to -29.59; P<0.05), combined group showed significantly difference in total blood loss (*Figure 4A*).

# Postoperative HB level

Nine studies reported postoperative HB level were included in this analysis. Five studies involving 585 patients compared combined TXA route with intravenous TXA and four studies involving 674 patients compared combined TXA route with topical TXA. The results showed that the combined route significantly increased postoperative HB level (MD, 0.54; 95% CI, 0.45 to 0.64; P<0.001; I<sup>2</sup>=71%) compared with the single regimen. Either compared with the intravenous (MD, 0.74; 95% CI, 0.61 to 0.87; P<0.05) or topical route (MD, 0.31; 95% CI, 0.16 to 0.45; P<0.05) showed significantly difference on postoperative HB level (*Figure 4B*).

# Transfusion rate

Six studies involving 799 patients reported transfusion rate were included in this analysis. No significant difference was observed in the transfusion rate (RR, 0.62; 95% CI, 0.26 to 1.48; P=0.28;  $I^2=3\%$ ) between combined TXA administration and single administration (*Figure 4C*).

# VTE rate

Eight studies involving 1,128 patients reported on VTE rate were included in this analysis. No significant difference was observed in the VTE rate (RR, 0.81; 95% CI, 0.57 to 1.15; P=0.24;  $I^2$ =0%) between combined TXA administration and single administration (*Figure 4D*).

#### Sensitivity analysis and publication bias analysis

Sensitivity analysis was also conducted to determine the impact on heterogeneity and evaluate the stability of the overall results by eliminating each study in turn. Our sensitivity analysis results show that our analysis was stable and reliable. We also conducted subgroup analysis and the results showed that surgery (bilateral TKA or unilateral TKA), region (Asia, Europe or North America), topical dose ( $\geq$ 3 or <3 g), intravenous dose ( $\geq$ 3 or <3 g), tourniquet (use or not use) had no impact on the overall effect of the analysis. Funnel plot was performed to evaluate the publication bias of literature. The results suggested that there was no evidence of publication bias in the meta-analyses.

# Discussion

TXA was widely used in primary TKA and the efficacy of TXA in reducing blood loss and transfusion rate has been reported in many studies, but the ideal route of administration has been controversial (36). At present, there is no unified standard for the administration of TXA, the most commonly method of TXA is intravenous injection and intra-articular topical injection, and some scholars think that the combination of the two can have a better effect (11,35). Some scholars also think that oral administration of TXA can achieve the same effect and is more economical (18,23). As there are many updated RCT studies comparing the administration of TXA, we carried out this metaanalysis to find the safest and effective method of using TXA in primary TKA.

The most important finding of this study was that the combined use of topical and intravenous administration of TXA is more beneficial than intravenous, topical or oral routes only. The results of this study suggested that the combined use of topical and intravenous administration of TXA reduced blood loss and preserved higher postoperative HB level than intravenous, topical or oral routes. In addition, there was no significant difference in the total

Α Mean Difference Mean Difference single combined IV. Random, 95% C Study or Subgroup Mean SD Total Mean SD Total Weight IV. Random, 95% CI 3.2.1 combined vs intravenous Cao2018 1,055 299 974 329 59 7.0% 81.00 [-32.44, 194.44] 59 385 191 Jain2016 182 59 60 -205.00 [-272.03, -137.97] 590 8.3% kim2018 299 175 154 280 183 154 8.8% 19.00 [-20.99, 58.99] Lee2017 95 764 217 -200.00 [-265.67, -134.33] 564 242 93 8.3% 519 368 Nielsen2016 644 382 30 1.017 30 4.0% -373.00 [-603.60, -142.40] Prakash2018 930 262 50 50 1,208 50 6.7% -278.00 [-403.21, -152.79] Song2017 946 162 972 268 50 7.8% -26 00 F112 80, 60 80 1,067 Tsukada2019 997 345 43 403 34 5.4% -70.00 [-240.24, 100.24] 58 Wang2019 671 352 60 915 243 7.1% -244 00 [-352 83 -135 17] Subtotal (95% CI) 600 588 63.4% -134.00 [-228.10, -39.89] Heterogeneity: Tau<sup>2</sup> = 17282.19; Chi<sup>2</sup> = 83.41, df = 8 (P < 0.00001); l<sup>2</sup> = 90% Test for overall effect: Z = 2.79 (P = 0.005) 3.2.2 combined vs topical 997 345 43 1.067 403 -70.00 [-240.24, 100.24] Cankava2017 34 5.4% Lee2017 Meshram2019 564 242 1,004 287 95 633 205 152 1,063 303 93 157 8.3% 8.3% -69.00 [-133.06, -4.94] -59.00 [-124.79, 6.79] Prakash2018 Song2017 930 262 50 50 1,198 356 998 256 50 50 6.7% -268.00 [-390.52, -145.48] 946 162 -52.00 [-135.97, 31.97] 7.8% Subtotal (95% CI) 390 384 36.6% -93.52 [-157.44, -29.59] Heterogeneity: Tau<sup>2</sup> = 2970.77; Chi<sup>2</sup> = 9.99, df = 4 (P = 0.04); |<sup>2</sup> = 60% Test for overall effect: Z = 2.87 (P = 0.004) Total (95% CI) 990 972 100.0% -119.58 [-181.68, -57.49] Heterogeneity: Tau<sup>2</sup> = 10980.44; Chi<sup>2</sup> = 93.42, df = 13 (P < 0.00001); l<sup>2</sup> = 86% -1000 500 -500 1000 Test for overall effect: Z = 3.77 (P = 0.0002) Favours [single] Favours [combined] Test for subaroup differences: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 0.49, df = 1 (P = 0.49), I<sup>2</sup> = 0% Mean Difference combined sinale Mean Difference В Study or Subgroup Mean SD Total Mean SD Total Weight IV, Fixed, 95% CI IV, Fixed, 95% CI 3.3.1 combined vs intravenous Jain2016 -1.14 0.5 59 -1.82 0.61 60 24.0% 0.68 (0.48, 0.88) Lee2017 -2.9 0.9 16.2% 0.90 [0.66, 1.14] -2 0.8 95 93 Nielsen2016 12.2 30 11.1 1.3 30 2.6% 1.10 [0.49, 1.71] 1.1 Song2017 -2.4 1.2 50 -2.9 1.2 50 4.3% 0.50 (0.03, 0.97) Wang2019 10.6 1.09 60 10 0.84 58 7.8% 0.60 [0.25, 0.95 Subtotal (95% CI) 294 291 54.9% 0.74 [0.61, 0.87] Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 4.96, df = 4 (P = 0.29); l<sup>2</sup> = 19% Test for overall effect: Z = 10.95 (P < 0.00001) 3.3.2 combined vs topical Cankaya2017 11 1.3 43 10.3 1.2 34 3.1% 0.70 [0.14, 1.26] Lee2017 -2 0.8 95 -74 0.8 1 93 184% 0.40 [0.17, 0.63] -3.9 Meshram2019 -3.7 152 157 19.3% 0.20 [-0.02, 0.42] 1 Song2017 0.10 [-0.37, 0.57 1.2 50 -2.5 50 4.3% -2.4 1.2 Subtotal (95% CI) 340 334 45.1% 0.31 [0.16. 0.45] Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 4.15, df = 3 (P = 0.25); l<sup>2</sup> = 28% Test for overall effect: Z = 4.11 (P < 0.0001) Total (95% CI) 625 100.0% 0.54 [0.45, 0.64] 634 Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 27.69, df = 8 (P = 0.0005); l<sup>2</sup> = 71% -0.5 0.5 Test for overall effect: Z = 10.87 (P < 0.00001) Favours [single] Favours [combined] Test for subaroup differences: Chi² = 18.58. df = 1 (P < 0.0001). I² = 94.6% Risk Ratio combined single Risk Ratio С Study or Subgroup Events Total Events Total Weight M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl Jain2016 59 4 60 30.6% 0.25 [0.03, 2.21] 1 King2019 28 0 25 4.1% 2.69 [0.11, 63.18] Meshram2019 2 152 0 157 3.8% 5.16 [0.25, 106.68] Prakash2018 50 50 34.7% 0 4 0.11 [0.01, 2.01] Song2017 0 50 1 50 11.6% 0.33 [0.01, 7.99] Wang2019 2 58 2 60 15.2% 1.03 [0.15, 7.10] Total (95% CI) 397 402 100.0% 0.62 [0.26, 1.48] Total events 6 11 Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 5.14, df = 5 (P = 0.40); l<sup>2</sup> = 3% 0.001 0.1 10 1000 Test for overall effect: Z = 1.08 (P = 0.28) Favours [single] Favours [combined] D Risk Ratio combined single Risk Ratio Study or Subgroup Events Total Events Total Weight M-H, Fixed, 95% Cl M-H, Fixed, 95% CI Cankaya2017 0 50 50 2.6% 0.33 [0.01, 7.99] Cao2018 10 59 16 59 27.6% 0.63 [0.31, 1.26] Jain2016 0 59 60 2.6% 0.34 [0.01, 8.15] Kim2018 17 154 21 154 36.2% 0.81 [0.44, 1.47] Lee2017 0 95 1 93 2.6% 0.33 (0.01. 7.91) Tsukada2019 43 34 7.7% 0.79 [0.21, 2.93] 4 4 60 Wang2019 5 3 58 5.3% 1.61 [0.40, 6.44] Zhang2019 10 50 9 50 15.5% 1.11 [0.49, 2.50] Total (95% CI) 0.81 [0.57, 1.15] 558 100.0% 570 56 Total events 46 Heterogeneity: Chi<sup>2</sup> = 2.96, df = 7 (P = 0.89); l<sup>2</sup> = 0% 0.005 200 0.1 10 Test for overall effect: Z = 1.17 (P = 0.24) Favours [single] Favours [combined]

**Figure 4** Forest plot between combined administration and single administration of tranexamic acid (A) blood loss. (B) Hemoglobin level. (C) Venous thrombotic events rate. (D) Transfusion rate.

blood loss, blood transfusion rate and VTE rate after single administration of TXA. The only difference is that the postoperative HB level of topical TXA administration was significantly increased compared with the intravenous TXA administration. Although many studies have shown that intravenous or topical TXA administrations have the same effect (24,33,34), our findings suggest that topical injection of TXA can be seen as a more effective route of single administration of TXA. There was no significant difference in blood loss and postoperative HB level between oral TXA and intravenous TXA or local TXA, which means that oral TXA can also be used as a method of clinical choice, and has more economic and convenient advantages. However, one meta-analyses have shown that topical and intravenous administration are equally effective in reducing blood loss and blood transfusion rate during TKA (6). Considering topical administration was a simple, surgeon-directed method, we believe topical administration of TXA could be an alternative of combined administration.

The use of topical or intravenous TXA in the setting of primary total joint arthroplasty has become routine practice because it has been shown to provide a clinical benefit and cost savings (40). However, there are still concerns about the safety of intravenous and oral TXA and the risk of thromboembolism in high-risk groups with a history of thromboembolism, acute myocardial infarction or ischemic cerebrovascular accident. Considering these safety issues, topical TXA can be a safe route of administration to reduce postoperative bleeding without increasing VTE associated with knee surgery (30). Our study confirmed that different administration did not significantly affect the incidence of postoperative VTE rate. It can be considered that the combination administration of TXA can bring the greatest benefits to patients without increasing the VTE rate.

The heterogeneity of this study was small, but we still do subgroup analysis. In our meta-analysis, we found that subgroups had no significant effect on the overall effect of the analysis. We believed that TXA had a good effect on reducing blood loss in both bilateral TKA and unilateral TKA and among different races, TXA can also play a good effect. There are still many disputes about the best amount of TXA, but this meta-analysis did not compare the amount of TXA in different groups. Subgroup analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the highdose group and the low-dose group, indicating that the use of low-dose TXA was equivalent to the use of high-dose TXA in reducing blood loss, but the optimal dose of TXA still needs further study. Some studies have shown that TXA can play a good role in hemostasis in TKA without tourniquet (10,14,15), so as to reduce the influence of tourniquet on postoperative rehabilitation. The subgroup of use tourniquet or not showed no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

There have been some meta-analyses on the efficacy and safety of TXA (6,7,9). These studies have shown that intravenous, topical and oral TXA were effective and safe routes, among which intravenous TXA is the most common. Compared to these meta-analysis, our study has some unique advantages. First, all included studies were RCTs. In our meta-analysis, the latest research has been included, and a large amount of researches have been included, which enhances the persuasiveness of the research. Second, a number of subgroups including surgery, region, TXA dose and tourniquet were analyzed to find out the relevant factors. The final results showed that subgroups had no significant effect on the overall efficacy of the analysis. Admittedly, there were a few limitations in the current study that should not be ignored. First, although the administrations of using TXA were compared, the optimal dosage of TXA was not considered in this study. Second, because of the low incidence of blood transfusion and VTE, more samples are needed to improve the statistical ability. Thirdly, the calculation method of total blood loss was not uniform, the calculation formula of different authors was not consistent, and the factors of postoperative drainage tube were not considered.

# Conclusions

This meta-analysis indicates that combined administration of TXA in primary TKA can significantly decrease total blood loss, postoperative HB drop compared with intravenous, topical or oral TXA alone. Oral administration of TXA is similar to intravenous or topical TXA use alone. No matter which administration, there is no significant difference between the postoperative transfusion rate and VTE rate.

#### **Acknowledgments**

*Funding:* This study was funded by National Natural Science Foundation of China (grant numbers 81972130, 81703896, 81972107, 82072494 and 81902203), the National Key Research and Development Program of China (grant number 2017YFC0108102), and the Capital Health Research and Development of Special (grant

number 2020-2-4067).

# Footnote

*Reporting Checklist:* The authors have completed the PRISMA reporting checklist. Available at http://dx.doi. org/10.21037/apm-20-1857

*Conflicts of Interest:* All authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at http://dx.doi. org/10.21037/apm-20-1857). The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

*Ethical Statement:* The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (as revised in 2013). This meta-analysis does not require the approval of the ethics committee.

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**Cite this article as:** Lu F, Sun X, Wang W, Zhang Q, Guo W. What is the ideal route of administration of tranexamic acid in total knee arthroplasty? A meta-analysis based on randomized controlled trials. Ann Palliat Med 2021;10(2):1880-1894. doi: 10.21037/apm-20-1857 intra-articular tranexamic acid in total knee arthroplasty: A double-blinded randomised controlled noninferiority trial. Knee 2016;23:152-6.

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