

VascStrong: Frailty and Associated Outcomes in Patients with Vasculitis (aka the Vasculitis Strength Study)

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[Click HERE to view the VascStrong poster abstract from the Annual ACR Meeting \(Nov 2023\)](#)

HOW DID WE DEFINE 'FRAILTY' IN THIS STUDY?

As people age or manage chronic conditions, we may become less able to recover from stress or illness. Clinicians call this **'frailty'**—a term used to understand a person's overall strength and ability to "bounce back" from stressors.

In this study, we used a short, validated questionnaire called the **FRAIL scale** to understand how "frail" someone might be. People rated themselves in the below areas. For each 'yes' answer, individuals received 1 point, with scores ranging from 0 to 5.



FATIGUE

feeling tired within the past 4 weeks



RESISTANCE

difficulty climbing 1 flight of stairs without resting



AMBULATION

difficulty walking 1 block without resting



ILLNESSES

≥ 5 of 11 comorbidities (other health conditions)



WEIGHT LOSS

≥ 5% weight loss in the last year (unexplained / intended)



STUDY AIMS

In this study, we wanted to know:

- Aim #1:** How common frailty is among patients with vasculitis
- Aim #2:** What health or lifestyle factors are linked to frailty
- Aim #3:** How a person's frailty level affects daily well-being and quality of life



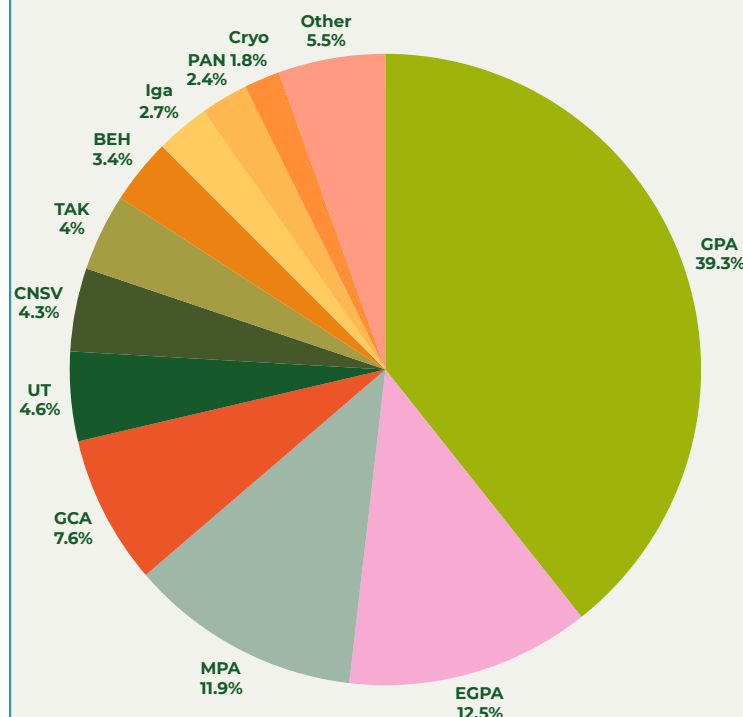
STUDY PARTICIPANTS

328

Adult Participants (Baseline)

59.5

Average Age, in Years



METHODS

- Surveys were sent to adult patients within the VPPRN
- Data collected:**
 - FRAIL scores (0-5)
 - Patient-reported data collected online from the VPPRN, specifically medication usage and PROMIS measures
- Timing of study:**
 - Baseline: Oct 2021 - Jan 2022
 - 1-Year Follow-up: Oct 2022 - Jan 2023

DATA HIGHLIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

How common is frailty?

A majority of people with vasculitis experience signs of frailty or are at risk of becoming frail.

36%

NONFRAIL

(answered yes to 0 criteria)

42%

PREFRAIL

(answered yes to 1-2 criteria)

22%

FRAIL

(answered yes to ≥ 3 criteria)

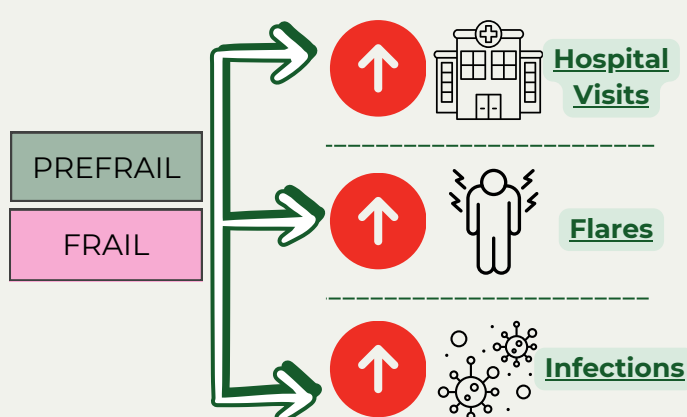
Is age tied to frailty?

No, getting older doesn't automatically mean becoming frail! Your overall health plays a bigger role. It is important to talk with your care team about changes in strength, energy, or mobility.

Aging doesn't equal frailty!

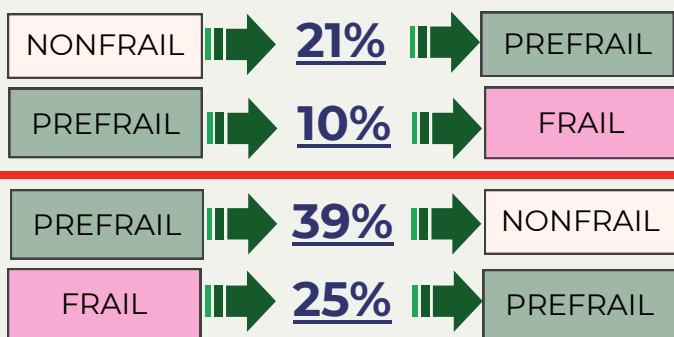


What health problems are more common in people who are pre-frail or frail?



Can frailty status change over time?

Yes, it is possible. In a small group of participants, we noticed changes in frailty over time - some became a little more frail over the course of a year, while others improved and felt stronger.



CONCLUSIONS

- Frailty is **quite common** among people living with vasculitis.
- Frailty is linked to **worse quality of life** and a **higher chance of serious health problems**, like hospital stays or disease flares.
- Frailty can **change over time** - it may improve or get worse. The encouraging news is that **frailty may be manageable for some people**. Early recognition and working with your care team may help support your health and well-being over time.

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