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| **Supplemental Table 1.** Baseline demographic and clinical characteristics in all patients supported with VV-ECMO prior to tracheostomy | |
| ***Baseline variables*** | *values* |
| **Demographics**  Age, years  Gender, males  Height, cm  Weight, kg  BMI, kg/m2  **Etiology of ARDS**  Infectious – *bacterial*  Infectious – *viral*  Infectious- viral & bacterial  Infectious –unknown  Unknown  Trauma  Toxic  Autoimmune  Neoplastic  **Severity of illness score**  APACHE-II Score on ICU admission  SOFA Score on ICU admission  SOFA Score on PDT  **Arterial gas analysis**  PaO2 , kPa  PaCO2 , kPa  pH  Lactate, mmol L-1  Base excess, mmol L-1  **Haemodynamic parameters**  Systolic arterial Pressure, mmHg  Diastolic arterial Pressure, mmHg  Mean arterial Pressure, mmHg  Heart rate, beats min-1  **ECMO settings**  ECMO pump flow, L min-1  Sweep gas flow, L min-1  Transmembrane Pressure, mmHg  Post-oxygenator PaO2, kPa  **Ventilatory settings**  Pressure control mode  APRV  Pressure support mode  Tidal volume (ml kg-1)  Actual respiratory rate (min-1)  FiO2 (%)  PaO2 / FiO2 (kPa)  **Pharmacological therapy**  Vasopressor, yes  Inotropes, yes  Dual antiplatelet, yes | 47(24)  39(60)  170(20)  77(25)  27(8)  26(40)  11(17)  6(9)  6(9)  5(8)  3(5)  2(3)  2(3)  1(2)  18(5)  10(6)  9(6)  9.5(2.0)  6.4(1.4)  7.38(0.06)  1.4(0.6)  1.5(4.4)  113(27)  56(12)  75(17)  94(23)  3.2(1.1)  3.0(4.5)  21(7)  56.4(20.1)  24(37)  8(12)  33(51)  6(4.6)  20(11)  35(10)  26(12)  16(25)  2(3)  1(2) |

Data for continuous variables are represented as median (interquartile range) and categorical variables as count with percentages in brackets



BMI, Body mass index; APACHE-II score, Acute Physiology And Chronic Health Evaluation; APRV, Airway pressure release ventilation; ECMO, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation; SOFA score, Sequential Organ Failure Assessment