INCIDENCE OF POST DURAL PUNCTURE HEADACHE IN SPINAL ANAESTHESIA FOR CHOLECYSTECTOMY

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DOI: 10.7897/2277-4572.032128
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Received on: 05/02/14 Revised on: 04/03/14 Accepted on: 25/03/14

ABSTRACT

Post dural puncture headache is a significant and well known complication of puncture of the dura mater. Historical reference to Post dural puncture headache was recorded by August Bier in 1899. There is a direct correlation between needle size and risk of Post dural puncture headache. This study comprised of 200 ASA grade I and II patients between 15 to 74 years of age of both sexes who underwent elective cholecystectomy. After undergoing a thorough pre-anesthetic check up each patient received pre-medication one night before surgery and skin sensitivity test was done. Patient was kept nil orally, a baseline pulse rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation were recorded. Lumbar puncture was done in sitting position at L3-L4 inter vertebral space with Quincke needle (23, 25, 26 G). After assuring a free flow of clear cerebrospinal fluid 4 ml of 0.5 % bupivacaine heavy was injected. After achieving satisfactory block patients were oxygenated by face mask and regular monitoring of pulse rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation was done and recorded. Statistical analyses was done by applying students ‘t’ test. The mean age of the patient was 41.2 ± 12.2 years and female patients outnumbered their male counterparts (87.5 %). 25G needle was used in maximum number of patients. The incidence of Post dural puncture headache with 23, 25, 26 G was 24.3 %, 9.2 %, 4.1 % respectively. On statistical analysis the Post dural puncture headache with 23G needle as compared to 25 or 26G (p < 0.05). However there is no statistical significance between 25 and 26G needles. The study concluded that the incidence of post dural puncture headache can be reduced to minimum with the use of small sized needles and proper technique of spinal anaesthesia by an experienced anaesthesiologist.

Keywords: Post dural puncture headache, duramater, bupivacaine, cholecystectomy, quincke needle.

INTRODUCTION

Post dural puncture headache (PDPH) is a significant and well known complication of puncture of the dura mater. This occurs in spinal anaesthesia and lumbar puncture and may accidentally occur in epidural anaesthesia. Leakage of cerebro-spinal fluid (CSF) through dural puncture appears to be the main cause of PDPH and was first proposed in 1902.1,2 Historical reference to PDPH was recorded by August Bier in 1899 and he described the headache as a feeling of very high pressure in the head, accompanied by light dizziness when raising quickly from the chair.1 There is a direct correlation between needle size and risk of PDPH. Small gauge needles are reported to have low incidence of complications.3 Meta analysis of 450 articles showed reduction of PDPH when small gauge non cutting spinal needles (pencil point) are used. With quincke needle the incidence of PDPH is directly related to the size of the needle used.4 Although pencil point needles are clearly associated with less PDPH compared to cutting needles of the same size yet cutting needles are widely used due to economic reasons and better ease of use.1,2

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This feasibility study comprised of 200 ASA grade I or II patients of both sexes, between 15 to 74 years of age, who underwent elective cholecystectomy. All the patients were screened by the surgical team and a thorough pre-anesthetic check-up with relevant investigations was done. After undergoing a thorough pre-anesthetic check-up each patient received Diazepam 5 mg orally, night before surgery and skin test was done with 0.1 ml of bupivacaine. The patient was kept nil orally. A baseline pulse rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation were recorded. An 18 gauge intravenous cannula was inserted and intravenous fluid was started before spinal anaesthesia. Lumbar puncture was done in sitting position at L2-L3 inter vertebral space. A quincke 23, 25 or 26 gauge spinal needle was used. After assuring a free flow of clear CSF, 4 ml of 0.5 % bupivacaine heavy was injected. When a satisfactory block was achieved, assessed by gently pinching the skin of the area desired, injection ondansetron was given intravenously followed by injection midazolam in titrated dose intravenously according to the patient’s need. All the patients were oxygenated with 4 litres/min by face mask. Regular monitoring of pulse, blood pressure and oxygen saturation was done. Any fall in pulse or blood pressure was managed by injection atropine and injection mephentermine respectively in titrated doses. Pain was treated with injection ketamine 0.5 mg/kg intravenously if needed. All the observations were recorded on an approved Proforma. All the observations, so obtained were subjected to statistical analysis to find percentage and ‘t’ values by paired and unpaired ‘t’ tests, as the case may be.

Ethical clearance number is 403/OJ dated 18/1/2011.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULT

The age of patients ranged from 15 to 74 years. The mean age was 41.2 ± 12.2 years. Female patients outnumbered their male counterparts being 87.5 % of the total number of patients. 25 gauge Quincke spinal needle was used in maximum number of patients (70.5 %). Spinal needles used in the remaining 29.5 % of cases was either 26 gauge (11 %) or 23 gauge (18.5 %) (Table 1). 11.5 % of all the patients developed post dural puncture headache. 23 gauge spinal needle was used in 37 patients, out of which 9 patients (24.3 %) complained of headache during post operative period, this number being 4.5 % of the overall incidence of headache. 25 gauge and 26 gauge spinal needles were used in 141 and 22 patients respectively, the incidence of headache pertaining to
these needles being 13 and 1 patient respectively (9.2 % and 4.5 %) (Table 2). On statistical analysis of the above data of incidence of headache related to size of needles, it was observed that the number of patients having post dural puncture headache with 23 gauge needles was significantly higher than those with 25 gauge needle (p < 0.05). The comparison of 23 gauge and 26 gauge needles too revealed a statistically significant higher incidence of headache with 23 gauge needles (p < 0.05). However, the statistical analysis of post dural puncture headache caused by 25 gauge and 26 gauge needles did not reveal any significant difference. 82.6 % of patients were relieved of headache by taking enough oral fluids and 17.4 % of patients responded by intravenous fluids (500-1000 ml) in 12 hours. No specific oral/parenteral analgesic was given to any of our patients for headache. However, analgesic injections were being used by the surgical team to relieve surgical pain postoperatively and oral NSAIDS were given for almost one week. None of our patients required aggressive management like blood patching (Table 3).

### Table 1: Size of Spinal Needle used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of needle (gauge)</th>
<th>Number of patients</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Incidence of Post Dural Puncture Headache

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of spinal needle (gauge)</th>
<th>No. of Patients</th>
<th>No. of patients developing post dural puncture headache</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Relief Measures for Post Dural Puncture Headache

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>No. of patients</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral fluids</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV fluids</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood patching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

Carrie and Collins define post dural puncture headache (PDPH) as “a headache occurring after dural puncture and has a significant effect on the patients post operative well being i.e. headache which is not only postural but also continues for more than 24 hours at any level of intensity or so severe at any time that the patient is unable to maintain upright position. The most discussed issue surrounding spinal anesthesia is PDPH, the incidence reported is between 0 % and 37 %, attributed mainly to patient selection and needle size. In our study, in a series of 200 patients, 23 (11.5 %) patients developed PDPH. The incidence of headache was almost similar with that of Vandam and Dripps. In their study the overall risk of PDPH was 11 % in 11000 cases of spinal anesthesia. Higher incidence of PDPH was reported by various authors which are discordant with our study. Flaaten and Raeder reported an incidence of 37.2 % of PDPH and Cesarini et al reported 14.5 % incidence of PDPH. A study done by Dagmar Oberhofer et al showed frequency of PDPH with 26 and 27G Quincke needles. It was 14.3 % in orthopaedic patients and 13.6 % in parturients. Lower incidence of PDPH were reported by Lybecker et al, Agarwal et al, Almeida et al and Myers et al. The incidence of PDPH in their studies were 7.35 %, 5.9 %, 5.6 % and 0.3 % respectively. In our study 23, 25 and 26 gauge spinal needles were used in 37, 141 and 22 patients respectively. 9 patients (24.3 %) complained of headache with 23 gauge needle, 13 patients (9.2 %) with 25 gauge needle and 1 patient (4.5 %) with 26 gauge needle during post operative period. On statistical analysis of the incidence of headache related to size of needles, it was observed that the number of patients having post dural puncture headache with 23 gauge needle was significantly higher than those with 25 gauge needle (p < 0.05) and the difference was also significant between 23 and 26 gauge needle (p < 0.05) but the study does not reveal any significant difference between 25 and 26 gauge needle. Cesarini et al performed a randomized trial of 24 gauge sprotte and 25 gauge quincke needles in patients receiving spinal anesthesia. There was 14.5 % incidence of PDPH in the quincke group while there was no incidence in sprotte group. Lambert et al reported the rate of PDPH with 25 gauge whitacre needle as 1.2 % in comparison to 27 gauge quincke needle as 2.7 %. Eckstein et al demonstrated a reduction in the incidence of headache from 12 % to 6 % when 25 gauge needle is substituted for a 22 gauge needle. A randomized comparison done by Buettner et al with 25 gauge whitacre and quincke needle revealed a significantly lower incidence of PDPH in the whitacre group (3 % versus 8.5 %). Vandam and Dripps noted that the incidence of PDPH ranged from 18 % with a 16 gauge needle to 5 % with 26 gauge needle. Gary and Kenneth quoted 8 % incidence of spinal headache but Myers et al reported only 0.3 % incidence of spinal headache with 26 gauge needle. Eckstein et al demonstrated a reduction in the incidence of headache from 12 % to 6 % when 25 gauge needle is substituted for a 22 gauge needle. A study was done by Corbey and Berg et al to compare the incidence of post dural puncture headache with 26 and 27 gauge quincke needles in 205 patients aged 16-45 years. They reported that PDPH was 4.5 % following the use of a 26 gauge needle and 8 % with a 27 gauge needle.
REFERENCE

Acknowledgement

We express our sincere thanks to Prof Anis Ismail and Prof Iqbal Aziz, Department of Surgery, Ajmal Khan Tibbia College, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India for their support and help in completion of work.

Aknowledgement

Post dural puncture headache is directly related to the size and type of the spinal needle used. The study concluded that the incidence of post dural puncture headache can be reduced to minimum with the use of small sized needles and proper technique of spinal anesthesia by an experienced anesthesiologist.

REFERENCES


Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared