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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Letter to the editor in response to the study: Preoperative gabapentin alone or in combination with dexamethasone on postoperative pain relief after abdominal hysterectomies. A randomized controlled trial



Dear Editor,

We read Ahmed A Badawy et al.'s paper [1] concerning a randomised controlled trial looking at Gabapentin and Dexamethasone administration peri-operatively with great interest. We would like to raise a couple of points regarding the study.

From the data that were collected we were wondering what the haemodynamic parameters of the patients in the different groups were. Gabapentin is certainly known to cause hypotension, and it would be useful to assess blood pressure fluctuations and vasopressor requirements in the different groups. This is especially pertinent given the recent work linking blood pressure variation with post-operative delirium [2].

We were also wondering what the evidence base for using a 20% rise from baseline in heart rate and blood pressure as a signal pain came from. Additionally, why was the initial dosing of gabapentin decided at 800 mg one hour prior to surgery used?

When considering the generalisability of this study, many centres use non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs as intra-operative or post operative analgesia. Why were these not included in this study protocol? Secondly, in many centres morphine is used instead of pethidine in recovery. This makes application of these findings difficult in other centres. Did the authors have any particular reason for using pethidine in this study?

Finally when considering the power calculation, why did the authors decide on time to first analgesia post-operatively as their primary outcome? Would total opiate use or incidence

of post-operative nausea and vomiting be a more useful primary outcome?

Overall, we would like to commend the authors on an important study, trying to reduce the opiate use peri-operatively. We are sure that gabapentin and other non-opiates will become an important part of the treatment arsenal of anaesthetists in time to come. We hope the authors extend this study to assess the effects of Gabapentin in preventing post-operative chronic pain.

Conflict of interest

None.

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None.

References

- [1] Badawy Ahmed A, El Sakka Ahmed. Preoperative gabapentin alone or in combination with dexamethasone on postoperative pain relief after abdominal hysterectomies. A randomized controlled trial. *Egypt J Anaesth* 2015;31(2):107–13.
- [2] Hirsch J, DePalma G, Tsai TT, Sands LP, Leung JM. Impact of intraoperative hypotension and blood pressure fluctuations on early postoperative delirium after non-cardiac surgery. *Br J Anaesth* 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/bja/aeu458> (first published online: January 23).

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