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Research article

Comparative study between ultrasound guided TAP block and paravertebral block in upper abdominal surgeries

Ruqaya M Elsayed Goda *, Tarek Abd El Kareim Eldahshan

Faculty of Medicine Al-Azhar University for Girls, Egypt
Faculty of Medicine, Al-Azhar University, Egypt

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ABSTRACT

Background: TAP and the paravertebral block both have been described as successful as an adjunct for postoperative analgesia following abdominal procedures. The proposed benefits of both include the avoidance of neuraxial analgesic techniques and their associated risks, as well as a reported reduction in opioid consumption.
Objective: This study is aimed to compare between ultrasound guided (TAP) block and ultrasound guided paravertebral block (PVB) and their effect as regard postoperative analgesia, the total analgesic requirements 24 h after abdominal surgeries, their impact on stress response and incidence of postoperative complications.
Methods: We performed a randomized controlled trial on 80 patients subjected to unilateral upper abdominal surgeries of both sexes, age between 20 and 50, and ASA physical status I–II. Patients were randomly divided into two equal groups. *Group* (*I*): 40 patients undergoing ultrasound guided unilateral transversus abdominis plane block *Group* (*II*): 40 patients undergoing ultrasound guided unilateral thoracic paravertebral block.
Results: There was a significant decrease in VAS scores in PVB group with relatively longer time to 1st order analgesia and relatively lower analgesic requirements than TAP group as regard stress response both group attenuate increase in post operative stress hormone with no significant difference. While PVB group decrease PONV more than TAP group with no significant difference between both groups as regard total ephedrine consumption.
Conclusion: We concluded that ultrasound guided transverses abdominis plane block and thoracic paravertebral block were safe and effective anesthetic technique for upper abdominal surgery with longer and potent postoperative analgesia in thoracic paravertebral block than transverses abdominis block.

1. Introduction

Adequate postoperative pain relief modifies the surgical stress response, aids recovery and leads to a better outcome following surgery. Local anesthesia techniques, and particularly abdominal wall field blocks, have long been recognized as an effective analgesic strategy that may be used to counteract postoperative wound pain [1].

Sensory afferent nerve branches of the lower six thoracic and upper lumbar nerves innervate the anterior abdominal wall and are the therapeutic target of local anesthetic to provide analgesia for the abdominal surgical incision [2].

Similarly, thoracic paravertebral block (PVB) has been demonstrated to provide effective postoperative analgesia in patients undergoing minor and major abdominal surgery by blocking sensory innervation of the abdominal wall [3].

Ultrasound guidance provide direct visualization of PVS puncture and the spread of local anesthetic [4].

To date, the TAP and the paravertebral block both have been described as successful as an adjunct for postoperative analgesia following abdominal procedures. The proposed benefits of both include the avoidance of neuraxial analgesic techniques and their associated risks, as well as a reported reduction in opioid consumption. Given that the side-effects of opioids are dose dependent, reducing postoperative analgesics requirements could putatively reduce the incidence of opioid-related problems, such as postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV) [5] and preventing noxious stimuli from reaching the central nervous system and

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* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Medicine Al-Azhar University for Girls, Ain Shams St., Cairo, Egypt.
E-mail address: drruqaya2000@yahoo.com (R.M Elsayed Goda).

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attenuate the surgical stress response so it prevents the hyperglycemic, cortisol and adrenocortical responses to surgery [6].

This study is aimed to compare between ultrasound guided (TAP) block and ultrasound guided paravertebral block (PVB) and their effect as regard postoperative analgesia, the total analgesic requirements 24 h after abdominal surgeries, their impact on stress response and incidence of postoperative complications.

2. Methods

This study was performed in general surgery operative room in Al-Azhar university hospital (Alzahraa). Prospective randomized trial carried out on 80 patients, of both sexes, age between 20 and 50, and ASA physical status I–II, subjected to unilateral upper abdominal surgeries (open cholecystectomy, incisional hernia).

All patients gave informed consent and proper explanation of the procedures involved in this study for each patient. The study protocol was approved by the local ethical committee.

Patients were randomized preoperatively using a closed envelope system into two groups according to the type of analgesic technique given to the patient. Randomization was performed by a member of the research team

Group (I): 40 patients undergoing ultrasound guided unilateral transversus abdominis plane block with 20 ml levobupivecaine 0.25%.

Group (II): 40 patients undergoing ultrasound guided unilateral thoracic paravertebral block with 20 ml levobupivecaine 0.25%.

2.1. Exclusion criteria

Patients who had chest, heart, hepatic and, or renal impairment were excluded from the study and also if there is an absolute contraindication to regional anesthesia e.g. history of allergic reaction to local anesthetics, bleeding diathesis and infection at the site of block.

2.1.1. Technique of group (I): which receive ultrasound guided unilateral transversus abdominis plane block

The patient was in supine position and after induction of general anesthesia, and before surgical incision. The linear probe of ultrasound machine was positioned perpendicular to the anterolateral abdominal wall. An echogenic needle would be attached with flexible tubing to syringe filled with the study solution was introduced at the plane of the ultrasound and was advanced forward until it had reached the plane between the internal oblique muscle and the transverse abdominal muscle. Saline solution was administered as soon as the plane has been reached, to ensure the correct position of the needle. Then the 0.25% levobupivecaine of 20 ml volume injection (it would appear as a hypoechoic space).

2.1.2. Technique of group (II): which receive ultrasound guided unilateral thoracic paravertebral block

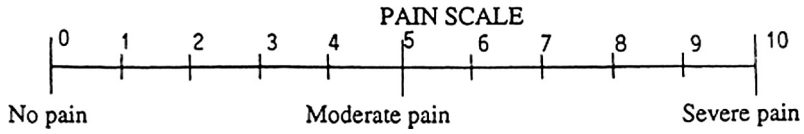
After induction of general anesthesia, before surgical incision the patient was placed in lateral position. The ultrasound linear probe in a vertical position approximately 2.5–3 cm lateral to the midline at level of T 10. The tip of the needle was advanced under direct visualization of ultrasound until it pierced the superior costotransverse ligment. When the needle tip was located immediately above the pleura, the needle was aspirated to confirm the absence of blood or air. After this, 20 cc of local anesthetic (levobupivecaine 0.25%) was injected in 3–4 cc increments. Spread of local anesthetic with depression of the pleura would be clearly visualized.

2.1.3. Assessment parameters

Outcome measures: the primary outcome was assessment of post operative pain by VAS. Secondary outcome was assessment of total analgesic requirements 24 h after abdominal surgeries, their impact on stress response and incidence of postoperative complications.

The following parameters were monitoring and observed.

1. Non invasive arterial blood pressure preoperatively then after induction of general anesthesia intraoperatively every 15 min up to 60 min and immediate postoperative then at 2, 6 and 24 h post-operative.
2. Assessment of analgesia postoperatively by visual analogue scale immediate postoperative then 2, 6 and 24 h postoperative. Assessment of the pain rating scale by visual analogue scale (VAS): 0 = none, (1–3) = mild, (4–7) = moderate, (8–10) = severe.



3. Assessment of the time (m) of the first analgesia dose was asked by the patients post operatively.
4. The doses (mg) of analgesics required ketolac in the first 24 h were determined.
5. Interleukin 6 and Cortisone measured to the patient preoperative and 6 h postoperatively:
   - **Serum IL-6 assay** was estimated by using commercial ELISA technique, R&D system Cat No 5060. 100 pg/ml concentration was done and from it 5 serial calibrator diluent standard were done (50, 25, 12.5, 6.25, 3.12 pg/ml respectively).
   - **Serum Cortisol assay** was estimated by using commercial ELISA kit, DRG (EIA- 1887). The cortisol standards of 0, 20, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 ng/mL concentrations were ready to use.
6. Presence of any complications and their frequency were listed such as postoperative nausea and vomiting PONV

2.2. Statistical analysis

Sample size was calculated using the Epi Info program (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA) by adjusting the confidence interval to 95% the margin of error accepted to 5% and the power of the test to 80% Data were collected and entered to the Statistical Package for Social Science (IBM SPSS) version 20. Qualitative data were presented as number and percentages and compared using Chi-square test while quantitative data were presented as mean, standard deviations and ranges and compared between two independent groups using Independent *t*-test and between two paired groups using Paired *t*-test. The confidence interval was set to 95% and p-value was considered non significant at the level of >0.05 (NS), significant at the level of >0.05 (S) and highly significant at the level of <0.01 (HS).

3. Results

The study carried out on 80 patients with their age ranging from 20 to 50 years of ASA I and II divided equally in two groups.

3.1. Group I: Ultrasound guided unilateral Transversus Abdominis Plane (TAP) Block

Patients had received ultrasound guided unilateral transverses abdominis plane block using levobupivecaine 0.25% (20 ml), and this group is referred as TAP.

3.2. Group II: Ultrasound guided unilateral Thoracic Paravertebral Block (PVB)

Patients had received ultrasound guided unilateral thoracic paravertebral block using levobupivecaine 0.25% (20 ml), and this group is referred as PVB.

Table 1
Comparison between the studied groups as regard Demographic Data. Value are expressed as mean ± SD.

	Groups					
	TAP		PVB		Tests	
					t/X^2	P-value
Sex						
Female	15	37.5%	10	25.0%	0.931	0.335
Male	25	62.5%	30	25.0%		
Age						
Range	2 1.0	50.0	23.0	50.0	−1.970	0.052
Mean ± SD	38.20	10.03	33.50	11.27		
BMI						
Range	24.5	30.2	25.6	29.7	0.590	0.556
Mean ± SD	27.6	4.65	28.1	3.78		
Surgery time						
Range	60.0	110.0	60.0	100.0	0.157	0.876
Mean ± SD	82.50	17.68	82.00	13.96		
ASA						
I	18	36.0%	22	44.0%	0.667	0.414
II	32	64.0%	28	56.0%		

3.2.1. Demographic data

In the present study, as regard sex, age, BMI, surgery time and there were no statistically significant difference between both groups Table 1.

3.2.2. Hemodynamic data

3.2.2.1. The mean arterial pressure (MAP). There were statistically no significant difference regarding values of MAP between TAP and PVB preoperatively, intraoperatively and whole postoperative period (see Fig. 1).

3.2.3. Visual analogue scale (VAS)

The result of this study showed that, there was significant decrease in VAS in PVB Group at the end of the operation, 2 h, 6 h and 24 h postoperatively Table 2.

3.2.4. Time to first order analgesia/hours

As regard time to first order analgesia there was a high significant increase in PVB Group Table 3.

3.2.4.1. Total analgesia requirements mg/day. As regard total analgesia requirements per day the results showed that there was a significant decrease in PVB group Table 3.

3.2.5. Stress response

(I) The results showed that as regard IL6 (ng/ml), serum cortisol level microgram/dl there was no significant increase from base line value preoperatively and 6 h postoperatively in TAP group (see Fig. 2).

(II) The results showed that as regard IL6 (ng/ml), serum cortisol level microgram/dl there was no significant increase from base line value preoperatively and 6 h postoperatively in PVB group (see Fig. 3).

3.2.6. Complications

The results showed that as regard PONV there was decrease in total number of patients who developed PONV in PVB group in comparison with TAP group Table 4.

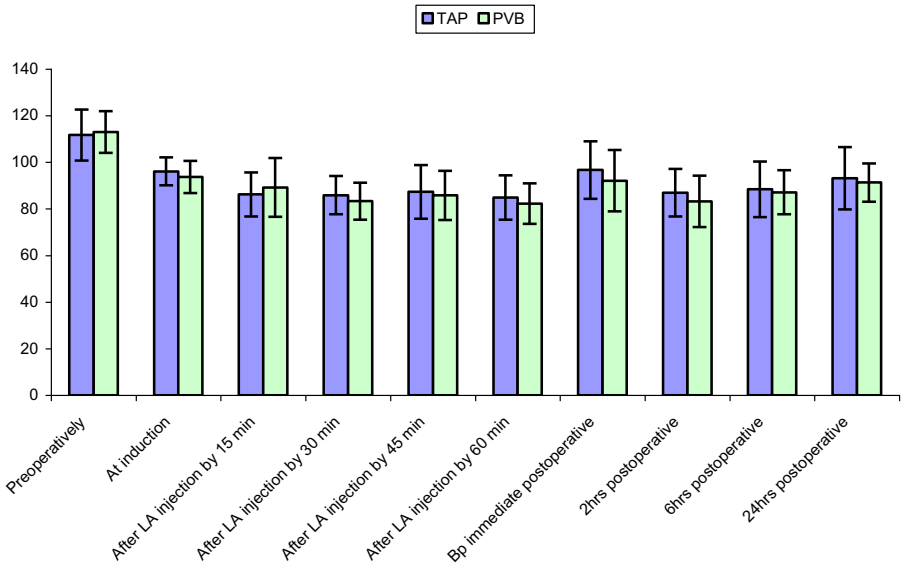


Figure 1. Comparison between TAP and PVB Groups as regard mean arterial blood pressure (MAP) Pre, Intra and Postoperative.

Table 2
Comparison between TAP and PVB Groups as regard Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) at the end of surgery and postoperative. Value are expressed as mean ± SD.

VAS	Groups			
	TAP	PVB	*T*-test	
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	*t*	P-value
At the end of the operation	2.1 ± 0.95	1.5 ± 0.84	2.992	0.004
2 h postoperative	3.5 ± 1.20	2 ± 0.78	−6.628	0.000**
6 h postoperative	2.70 ± 1.18	2.20 ± 1.09	2.201	0.030*
24 h postoperative	4.00 ± 1.50	3.40 ± 1.12	2.266	0.026*

Non significant > 0.05; *Significant < 0.05; **highly significant < 0.001.

Table 3
Comparison between TAP and PVB Groups as regard time to first order analgesia and total analgesia requirements at the end of surgery and postoperative period. Value are expressed as mean ± SD.

Groups	Range	Mean ± SD	*T*-test	
			T	P-value
Time to first order analgesia(/hours)				
TAP	8.0–12.0	14.58 ± 2.25	5.718	>0.001*
PVB	16.0–22.0	18.83 ± 4.75		
Total analgesia requirements (mg/day) (ketolac)				
TAP	18.0–45.0	31.00 ± 20.33	2.117	0.036*
PVB	15.0–30.0	24.50 ± 7.63		

Non significant > 0.05; Significant < 0.05; highly significant < 0.001.

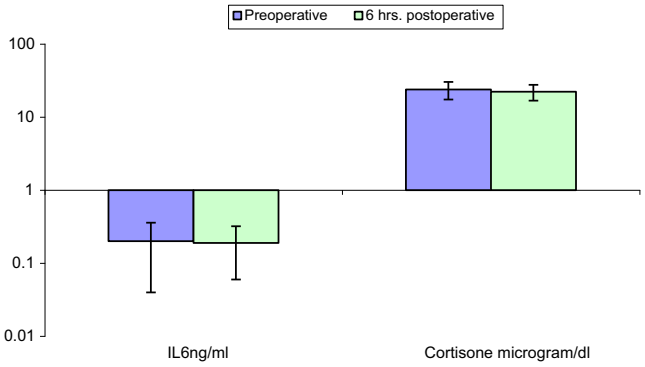


Figure 2. Comparison between preoperative stress hormones and 6 h postoperative as regard IL6, Cortisone in TAP group.

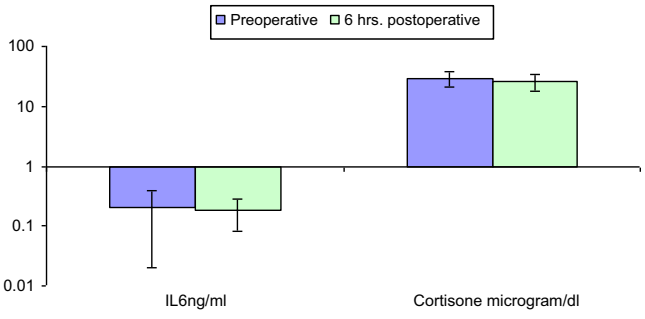


Figure 3. Comparison between preoperative stress hormones and 6 h postoperative as regard IL6, Cortisone, in PVB group.

Table 4
Comparison between TAP and PVB groups as regard PONV. Value are expressed as mean ± SD.

Complications	TAP		PVB	
	N	%	N	%
Failure rate	0	0.0%	4	10.0%
Nausea	8	20.0%	3	7.5%
Vomiting	6	15.0%	2	5.0%

Non significant > 0.05; Significant < 0.05; highly significant < 0.001.

4. Discussion

The present study was designed to evaluate intra and postoperative ultrasound guided TAP block compared to ultrasound guided PVB block to alleviate postoperative pain.

The result of this current study indicate that no significant difference in the demographic data (age, sex, BMI, ASA) between ultrasound guided TAP block and ultrasound guided PVB block ($p > 0.05$).

The results of the present study showed that as regard MAP there was no significant difference between two groups ($p > 0.05$).

In agreement with this study Melnikov et al. [7] reported that there were no significant difference between ultrasound guided transversus abdominis block and thoracic paravertebral block in abdominal surgery as regard MAP and HR.

The results of the present study as regard VAS there was significant decrease in VAS scores in paravertebral group in immediate postoperative period, 2, 6 and 24 h postoperative.

Melnikov et al. [7] supported that PVB lower VAS scores in all postoperative period up to 48 h postoperatively, except at 6 h postoperative as TAP block had slightly lower VAS scores more than PVB when comparing the analgesic effect of paravertebral block and transversus abdominis block in major gynecological surgery.

Cengiz et al. [8] reported that PVB lower VAS scores in postoperative period up to 24 h postoperative when comparing the effect of transversus abdominis plane block and paravertebral block on postoperative pain in inguinal hernia surgery.

In disagreement with this study, Carney et al. [9] reported that TAP block performed preoperatively provides sufficient and long lasting analgesia in patients undergoing abdominal hysterectomy.

As regard time to first order analgesia and total analgesic requirements our study found that the time for first order analgesia in PVB group was relatively longer than that in TAP group and the total analgesic requirements in PVB group was relatively lower than that of TAP group.

Melnikov et al. [7] supported that ketolac consumption was significantly lower in the PVB group compared with that in the TAP block group, while there was increase in the time for first order analgesia in PVB group compared with that in the TAP block group.

Supporting this study, Cengiz et al. [8] found that PVB decrease postoperative analgesic consumption with increase the time for first order analgesia when comparing the effect transversus abdominis plane and paravertebral block on postoperative pain in inguinal hernia surgery.

In disagreement with this study, Jankovic [10] reported that preoperative TAP block decrease postoperative analgesic consumption and increase in time for order analgesia in lower abdominal surgery.

Aveline et al. [11] also reported that preoperative TAP block decrease postoperative analgesic consumption and increase in time for order analgesia in comparison between ultrasound-guided transverses abdominis plane and conventional ilioinguinal/iliohypogastric nerve blocks for day-case open inguinal hernia.

As regard stress response the present study found that ultrasound guided TAP block attenuate increase in postoperative stress hormones level and no significant difference between preoperative and 6 h postoperative stress hormones level.

Cho et al. [12] resulted that there was no statistically significant change in the blood cortisol level, IL6 or RBS at any time of measurement (intraoperatively or postoperatively) in comparison with preoperative cortisol blood level, IL6 blood level and RBS when studying postoperative analgesic effects of ultrasound-guided transversus abdominis plane block for open appendectomy.

Also supported these results, Beyaz et al. [13] have investigated the effects of peri-operative stress response of PVB in patients undergoing open cholecystectomy and demonstrated that a significant reduction in circulatory and hormonal response.

Manoj et al. [14] supported that PVB prevents the hyperglycemic, cortisol and adrenocortical responses to surgery also lipolysis and the loss of proteins are also attenuated when comparing combined general anesthesia with PVB block versus general anesthesia alone in modified radical mastectomy.

As regard postoperative nausea and vomiting, the present study concluded that PVB decrease PONV more than TAP block as in PVB 5 patients developed N&V while 14 patients developed PONV in TAP group.

In agreement with this study, Melnikov et al. [7] concluded that PVB decrease PONV more than TAP block as 4 patients need anti-emetics in PVB group while 8 patients need anti-emetics in TAP group when comparing PVB and TAP block in major gynecological surgery.

Cengiz et al. [8] reported that 2 patients received anti-emetics (10 mg metoclopromide IV) in TAP block group while no patient received anti-emetics in PVB group when comparing TAP block versus PVB in inguinal hernia surgery. The study was performed on 60 patients.

In disagreement with the present study, Omar [15] reported that TAP block reduced PONV significantly when comparing postoperative continuous TAP block versus continuous wound infusion of levobupivacaine in females undergoing open gynecologic procedures.

5. Conclusions

We concluded that ultrasound guided transverses abdominis plane block and thoracic paravertebral block were safe and effective anesthetic technique for upper abdominal surgery with attenuation in stress response to surgery in both techniques, reduced total alagesic dose requirements postoperative and reduced complications with longer and potent postoperative analgesia in thoracic paravertebral block than transverses abdominis block.

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