

Epidural Steroid Along With Tramadol For low Back Pain With Sciatica.(Original Article)

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ABSTRACT:- Epidural steroid injection has equally good results in acute cases than chronic cases. Duration of relief varied from 1wk to 4months. Low back pain continues to be a leading cause of disability. It is the commonest complaint of most of the patients presenting to the pain clinic and orthopaedic out patient department. The cost to society and the patient in the form of time lost at work, compensation and treatment is staggering.

Key words:- Epidural injection, methylprednisolone, Tramadol, xylocard

I. INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that about 80% population suffers from low backache at some time with annual prevalence of 18% and incidence of 15-20% (Quebec Task Force on spinal Disorders). Low back pain can be self limiting but 1% patient remain chronically disabled and stay off work for more than two years. The spinal nerves emerge from the spinal cord; they travel laterally 1-2 cm before they exit the spine. It is at this exit (intervertebral foramen) that these nerves are most likely compressed or 'pinched' by either a herniated disc or bony spurs, narrowing of the exit secondary to the calcification and decreased spacing between the vertebrae. This pressure on the spinal nerves causes inflammation and pain. The pain could affect the back alone or can irradiate

to the legs, which is known as sciatica. Various surgical treatments require high cost major surgery. All kinds of treatment including bed rest, physiotherapy, manipulations, traction, has conservative treatments for these conditions include analgesics, anti-inflammatory drugs, physical therapy and epidural steroid injections. Other therapies are heat, acupuncture, massage and stress, skill and all risk. Epidural steroid injections are most effective in the presence of nerve root compression. Epidural steroid injections are safe and conservative. Method of treatment for chronic low back pain. They are quick, simple and economic. All hazards of spinal surgeries are avoided. The steroids are potent anti-inflammatory agents and are injected near affected nerve roots. These injections are effective when given in the first week of onset of pain. Usually 2-3 injections are required but patient can have relief with single injection also. This study was undertaken to evaluate whether there is any effect on addition of midazolam to steroids used.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Informed consent was obtained from all 100 patients (ASA grade I and II who attended orthopedic OPD and then were referred to pain clinic. Patients with known cardiopulmonary/endocrine disorders were excluded from the study. Pain was assessed by VAS visual analogue scale, modified according to the patient's individual perception, in percentile. Straight leg raising test (SLR), Lasegue's test were done prior to the epidural injections, after each such injections and during the follow ups. These epidural injections were given at monthly intervals and the patients were given at monthly intervals and the patients were followed in the 2nd, 6th and 16th weeks. The patients were divided into 2 groups on the basis of whether they received methylprednisolone along with injection Tramadol by epidural route. Patients in group I received 2ml (80mg) of methyl prednisolone and 25mg of tramadol with 2% 2ml xylocard diluted in 15ml normal saline. Patients in group II received 2ml of methylprednisolone and 2ml xylocard diluted in 10ml of normal saline. Procedure was undertaken in orthopedic OT under all aseptic precautions, epidural injection was given using 18 g needle in the sitting position. Vitals were monitored for 30 minutes in supine position.

Monitoring included pulse rate (PR) noninvasive blood pressure (NIBP), oxygen saturation (SpO₂) and cardiac monitoring of lead II when required. Results were categorized into four groups as done by Berman et al (1984) in their study – Excellent i.e. complete relief of pain and other symptoms no need for further treatment. Good i.e. complete or near complete relief of

pain with minimal work restriction: Fair i.e. pain and other symptoms of moderately decreased intensity with moderate work restriction and poor i.e. no relief, unable to work and requires further treatment.

Statistical analysis – Chi square test was used to compare data with discrete variables while C test was used to compare data continuous variables. A p value of .005 was taken as statistically significant. All data were

presented in percentage or mean \pm S.D. (Standard deviation) . The sample size required for having power of 80% for fulfilling primary goal (i.e percentage of

effectiveness of epidural steroids for low back pain with sciatica) of study was 30, based on previous studies . we had taken 51 patients in each group to obtain power of >90%

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III. RESULTS

Total 100 patients with age 20-75 yrs of either sex were included in study large number of patients were in 30-50 yrs of age range . Mean age of patient was 45.3 \pm 13.1, there was no significant difference in the mean age and sex of the patients between the two groups (p.0.05). heavy workers labourers were 29.1% while others were sedentary workers Duration no . of patients Percentage

TABLE

Duration	No of patients	percentage	
Acute	22	21.4%	
Chronic	78	78.6%	
Total	100	100	

Table- Results as per pain relief

Results	V.A.S. SCORE	Improvement of pain	Number of patients
Excellent	0.2-2.5	75%	20
Good	2.5-5	50-75%	63
Fair	5-7.5	25-50%	11
poor	7.5-10	<25%	09
Total Mean \pm S.D.=60.3 \pm 20.1%			

Table . Results as per duration of symptoms

Results	Acute	Chronic
Excellent	9	11
Good	11	50
Fair	01	10
Poor	01	07
Total	22	81

Table: complications

No of complications	Over all
Blood vessel puncture	6
CSF	2
Nausea	2
Fall in BP	0
Hiccups	2
Weakness in lower limbs	4
Increase in pain of sciatica	8
Headache	3
Local site pain	4
Infection	-

Vasovagal attack	2
Failure	5

Bilateral sciatica constituted 32% patients 28.16% of patients presented with neurological deficit in the form of sensory motor involvement Patients were grouped into two depending upon the duration symptoms(acute/chronic) .In acute cases duration of symptoms was less than three months . In chronic patients , duration of symptoms was more than 3 months .Acute group constituted 21.4% and chronic cases 78.6% . There was a Significant difference in the degree of improvement of sciaticain both groups and in both sides regarding straight leg raising test as revealed by a p value .The pain relief lasted more in group 1 with tramadol . out of 100 patients60 had good improvement of pain (50-75%) 20 had excellent improvementand 11 had fair improvement .Mean improvement was 60.3% and theimprovement ranged from 40%-80%.There was significant differences in results as per duration of symptoms(acute/chronic) we had few insignificant complications occurred in any patient in our study

IV. DISCUSSION

The use of steroid for low back pain with sciatica was startedby Cappio M (1951)² The Suggested Mechanism of action of steroid is --

1. Breaking up of adhesions around the nerves (the adhesions cause oedema by obstruction of free flow of fluid in nerves and cause direct damage to the nerves by compression).
 2. Probably accelerates healing of the irritated and inflammatory state of nerve roots and reduces oedema.
 3. Inhibits phospholipase A2 and cycl-oxygenase enzyme(Lee ,et al 1998)³
- Depomedrol (methyl prednisolone) is the safest steroidal agent when used epidurally and other agents which can be used are betamethasone acetate , dexamethasone and triacnolone . LBP can be classified into 5 principle categories but ESI are indicated in spondylogenic and neurogenic back pain only physiotherapy, drugs may or may not work for every patient . Surgical treatment will need skilled surgeon and it also increases cost and risks.surgery may not be needed every time so ESI has been used many years

We aimed to study role of route in the final result . we had 46females and 54 males, a total of 100 patients in our series -- accordingto Gupta et al (1996)⁴ ,Commonest age group was between 30-40 years , while in our series , the commonest age group was 40-50years , followed by 30-40 and 50-60 years . 50 patients had suddenonset of symptoms where as 50 patients had gradual onset .cause of sudden onset was most often lifting of heavy weight /bending.According to papagelopoulos et al ⁵, the most common cause for backpain with sciatica was disc herniation (50%) in our series also the clinical diagnosis in most of the patients was disc herniation . As far as drug is concerned in our series 78.43%of patients in group1 had excellent to good results while it was 82.69% in group II hadfair results in 21.57% in group I and 17.3% in group II respectively. In the group I with Tramadol the analgesic effect was prolonged .According to Wallace et al⁶ and Sethi et al ⁷ lumbar route is effective because it deposited the drug close to the site of lesion . so that route was chosen. ESI are effective in both acute and chronic cases of LBP .In our study 30 acute cases had excellent good results while 77.8% of chronic cases had good to excellent results.ESI are most effective during the acute phase of pain and inflammation according to V,Sing et al⁸Stahler ⁹ reported that an ESI can be very beneficial for a patient during an acute episode of back pain .According to report published by Manchikanti et al ¹⁰ ESI with orwithout local anaesthetic can provide pain relief in patients ofchronic back pain or sciatica .After successful injection the effect maylast from few months to several years.

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