

The Use of 5% Lidocaine for Prolonged Analgesia in Chronic Pain Patients

Doo Ik Lee, M.D. and Dong Ok Kim, M.D.

Department of Anesthesiology, College of Medicine, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, 130-702, Korea

Purpose: The use of neurolytic agents to control chronic pain has been described from the last century. Phenol and ethyl alcohol have been widely used as neurolytic agents, however, their neurolytic effect is variable in efficacy and duration of action, and infrequently accompanied with grave complications. It has been found that 5% lidocaine causes irreversible conduction blockade in animal studies. The goal of this study was to evaluate the neurolytic effect of 5% lidocaine on various neuropathic pain syndromes for prolonged analgesia.

Methods: Twenty-five patients with a diagnosis of neuropathic pain including trigeminal neuralgia (n = 7), postherpetic neuralgia (n = 10) and postsurgical neuralgia (n = 8) were selected after failure of routine therapeutic regimens. After performing a diagnostic nerve block with 1% lidocaine, 5% lidocaine was injected. The patients were followed for 6 months. Visual analog scale (VAS) scores and side effects were recorded for each patient.

Results: A significant decrease in pain scores after neurolytic blockade with 5% lidocaine was seen in all of three pain groups. All the patients reported immediate and prolonged pain relief lasting from 4 weeks to 6 months. None of patients exhibited any appreciable side effects or complications.

Conclusions: We suggest that 5% lidocaine may be used safely and effectively for the purpose of prolonged analgesia in selected patients with intractable neuropathic pain syndromes.

REFERENCES

- Lambert LA, et al: Anesthesiology 1994; 80: 1082-93.
Choi YK, et al: Reg Anesth Pain Med 1988; 23: 96-100.