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*Comparative Study between Combined High Thoracic
Epidural Block and General Anesthesia with General
Anesthesia Alone on Left Ventricular Functions by
Using Transesophageal Echocardiography during
Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery*

Thesis

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of MD Degree in "Anesthesiology and Intensive Care"

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction and Aim of Work.....	1
Review of Literature.....	5
Chapter I: Principle of Transesophageal Echo	5
..... 13 Clinical Application of Transesophageal Echo.....	Chapter II:
Chapter III: Advantage of Transesophageal Echo	27
Chapter IV: Complication of Transesophageal Echo	31
Chapter V: Assessment of LV Functions by TEE	
.....	36
Chapter VI: Thoracic Epidural	
anaesthesia.....	47
Patients and Methods.....	54
Results	68
Discussion.....	87
Summary.....	99
conclusion.....	101
References.....	102
Arabic Summary	

LIST OF TABLES

Page No.	Title	Tab. No.
Table (1):	Wall motion by phase and thickening.....	24
Table (2):	Grading LV functions by ejection fraction.	42
Table (3):	Normal ranges for subaortic velocity time.....	42
Table (4):	Guide to LV systolic long-axis function Normal Severely abnormal	43
Table (5):	Guideline diagnosis of diastolic dysfunction....	45
Table (6):	Diastolic function using transmitral and PV pulsed Doppler.....	46
Table (7):	Reports of epidural anesthesia and analgesia for cardiac surgery.	51
Table (8):	Comparison between the study groups as regard age, sex, ASA classification, weight, height, EF%, number of graft.:	68
Table (9):	Comparison between the study groups as regard: Operative time, bypass time, cross clamp time.: ...	70
Table (10):	Comparison between the study groups as regard heart rate.:	71
Table (11):	Comparison between the study groups as regard mean blood pressure.:	73
Table (12):	Comparison between the study groups as regard central venous pressure:.....	74
Table (13):	Comparison between the study groups as regard epinephrine use.:.....	75
Table (14):	Comparison between the study groups as regard vasodilator use	76
Table (15):	Comparison between the study groups as regard E/A ratio, Decleration time, Tran's mitral propagation velocity:.....	78
Table (16):	Comparison between the study groups as regard Fraction area change	81
Table (17):	Comparison between the study groups as regard Extubation time, ICU stay, Mortality, Morbidity, total morphin dose in 24 hr.	82

LIST OF FIGURES

Page No.	Title	Fig. No.
Figure (1): Photograph of a currently available multiplane TEE probe.....		5
Figure (2):Instrumentation of transesophageal echocardiography		7
Figure (3): M mode echocardiogram of the left ventricle (transgastric view).		10
Figure (4): 2D four chamber view		17
Figure (5): insertion of TEE probe.....		14
Figure (6): TEE probe and multiplanar transducer		15
Figure (7): TEE probe: anatomical relationships.....		15
Figure (8): Three primary axes of interrogation.....		16
Figure (9): Basal short axes view showing aorta.....		17
Figure (10): Short axis view		17
Figure (11): Long axis view.....		18
Figure (12) Four chamber long axis view.:		18
Figure (13): Five chamber long axis view.....		19
Figure (14): Transgastric short axis view		19
Figure (15): Short axis view showing descending aorta.		20
Figure (16) LV filling patterns:.....		44
Figure (17): Propagation velocity flow patterns		45
Figure (18):. Technique for epidural insertion		56
Figure (19): Equipment's forepidural anesthesia		57
Figure (20): Patient distribution according to age, weight, height, EF%, number of graft..		69
Figure (21): Patient distribution according to sex, ASA.....		69
Figure (22): Difference between both groups in operative time, bypass time, cross clamp time		71
Figure (23): Difference between both groups in heart rate.		72

Figure (24): difference between both groups in mean blood pressure..	73
Figure (25): Difference between both groups in central venous pressure.	74
Figure (26): Difference between both groups in epinephrine use.	57

Page No.	Title	Fig. No.
Figure (27): Difference between both groups in vasodilator use	77	
Figure (28): Difference between both groups in Decleration time.	79	
Figure (29): Difference between both groups in Transmitral propagation velocity.....	80	
Figure (30) Difference between both groups in fraction area change.....	8	
Figure (31) Difference between both groups in extubation time, ICU stay, mortality,morbidity.....	8	
Figure (32): Difference between both groups in total morphine doses in hours.....	24	
		83

Introduction

High thoracic epidural anesthesia (HTEA) administered in addition to general anesthesia in cardiac surgery has been extensively investigated because of its potential beneficial effects including perioperative stress response attenuation, cardiac sympathetic nerve block and excellent analgesia (*Chaney, 1997*).

Moreover, HTEA dilates epicardial coronary arteries, partly normalize the myocardial blood flow in response to sympathetic stimuli, improves left ventricular function, has anti-ischemic properties, and reduces postoperative release of cardiac troponinI (cTnI) and T (cTnT) (*Loick et al, 1999*).

The anti-ischemic effects of the inhibition of sympathetic nervous outflow to the heart are supposed to arise from changes in the major determinants of myocardial oxygen demand because it reduces heart rate (HR) and preload and afterload of the left ventricle (LV) without affecting coronary perfusion pressure (CPP). Furthermore, HTEA attenuates the paradoxical vasoconstrictor response that has been observed at the site of atherosclerotic lesions and increases the luminal diameter of dynamic stenosis of epicardial coronary arteries. Thus, HTEA is assumed to alleviate myocardial ischemia by improving global myocardial oxygen balance and by redistributing myocardial blood flow to vulnerable regions (*Blomberg et al., 1990*).

Both effects of HTEA may result in an improvement of overall systolic and diastolic LV function. Despite several previous clinical and

experimental studies, questions remain about the effect of HTEA on systolic left ventricular function, which has variably been reported to be unchanged, impaired, or even improved in healthy individuals and in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD). The use of HTEA in patients who receive perioperative anticoagulation during cardiac surgery has been questioned because of the theoretical increased risk of epidural hematoma formation facilitated by full anticoagulation. Evidence from randomized trials has not been conclusive.

The increased sympathetic activity associated with injury induces distinct changes in the host's hormonal and immune response and in the coagulation system. These highly conserved defense mechanisms can turn against the host in the case of coexisting cardiovascular disease. Number of synergistic mechanisms is involved in cardiac complications during stress. Increased catecholamine levels increase left ventricular afterload and heart rate, while decreasing the time for coronary perfusion (*Scott et al., 2001*).

Altered and stenotic coronary arteries do not respond to sympathetic stimulation. Raised corticotropin-releasing hormone levels reduce cardiac nitric oxide (NO) release and increase endothelin production. This aggravates coronary endothelial dysfunction. After both minimally invasive and major open surgery increased serum levels of stress hormones have been recorded. Stress induces a pro-coagulatory state in the absence of any trauma. This effect is prolonged with increasing age and may persist for weeks after surgery. Finally, early after stressful events, a pro-inflammatory response may lead to plaque instability via activation of matrix metallo proteinases. This triad triggers acute coronary syndrome and myocardial infarction during and after

stressful events. Consequently, cardiovascular causes account for 63% of perioperative mortality in a high-risk patient population and are still responsible for 30% of perioperative mortality in low-risk patients (*Kozian et al., 2005*).

Furthermore, the fact that the occurrence of major postoperative complications is usually low, in the range of 1% to 5%, strongly limits the power of these studies to detect significant differences (*Bignami E et al., 2009*).

Aim of the Work

The aim of this study is to compare between two groups the first group is general anesthesia alone and the second group is combined general anesthesia and high thoracic epidural block on systolic and diastolic left ventricular function in coronary artery diseased patients undergoing elective CABG surgery.

It also compare between both groups in hemodynamic stability

Such as (mean blood pressure ,heart rate, central venous pressure)

And surgical time, cross clamp time, bypass time, post-operative ICU stay. Also it will study the need of inotropic support and vasodilator drugs during surgery.

The study compare between both groups in post-operative narcotic consumption in ICU.

Principle of Transesophageal Echo

Understanding of ultrasound physics and the control settings of ultrasound machines is very essential to obtain good quality images. Ultrasound is high-frequency sound, which is produced when a piezoelectric crystal, mounted in a transducer, is stimulated by electrical current. The sound waves are too high in frequency to be audible by human ears. They are thought to be harmless to tissue at the intensities used in diagnostic imaging. In echocardiography, sound is directed into the body and is reflected by interfaces between tissues of different acoustic impedance such as myocardium, valves and blood. Blood reflect little sound so it appears relatively black (hypoechoic, or anechoic) in compare with the myocardium, which reflects more of the ultrasound waves and therefore appears relatively white (hyperechoic or echoic). The endocardium and valves are the most echogenic structures.

An ultrasound wave does not pass through air or bone. The echo machine consists from three important parts: the transducer or the echo probe, the monitor and the processing unit. There are different modes of echocardiography; each has its advantages and disadvantages.



Fig. (1): Photograph of a currently available multiplane TEE probe.

Historical Perspective:

In an effort to overcome the shortcomings of the transducers available for routine transthoracic echocardiographic imaging, the possibility of imaging the heart posteriorly, from within the esophagus, was explored, thus avoiding ultrasound attenuation by the lung. Transesophageal echocardiography grew from the development and the concurrent advancements of the fiber-optic gastroscope, as shown in the historical time line in figure. Most notably, the development of a flexible