

Acute Pain Service: Initial audit of 200 epidurals in perioperative pain management in a tertiary care centre

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Aim

To assess the implementation of an acute pain service in Safdarjung Hospital by means of an initial audit of 200 epidurals in the perioperative period.

Methods

Acute pain service is an organisational setup to manage postoperative and other aspects of acute pain. In the present time it should be an essential part of all tertiary care hospitals. We did a modest beginning in this direction an year ago and have decided to audit of the first 200 followups. To understand how epidural analgesia was being used to treat perioperative pain in Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, a retrospective chart review was performed. The audit was performed on first 200 patients, who received epidural analgesia during the perioperative period from January 2012 to June 2012. Data were collected under the headings of demographic profile, surgical speciality, technique preferred, duration of surgery, the drug top-ups recommended, the drugs actually used and side effects, if any.

Results

The average age of patients was 44.3 years. There were 40 % females and 60% males receiving the treatment. The mean duration of surgery was 194 minutes. The most common technique used was a combined spinal epidural (CSE) in 71.5 % patients. The most common surgical speciality was orthopaedics, amassing 52.5% of the patients. A test dose was preferred by the attending anaesthesiologist in 61.5 % of cases. Commonest side effect encountered was a blocked catheter in 11.5% cases, which precluded any further usage. Commonest narcotic used was tramadol. The commonest local anaesthetic used was bupivacaine both intraoperatively and postoperatively. No records of followup by nursing staff are presently available in wards for the above.

Conclusion

The audit highlighted the problems of organisation and implementation of the acute pain service which will help us make safer protocols and make the service more effective and be multidisciplinary in its approach.