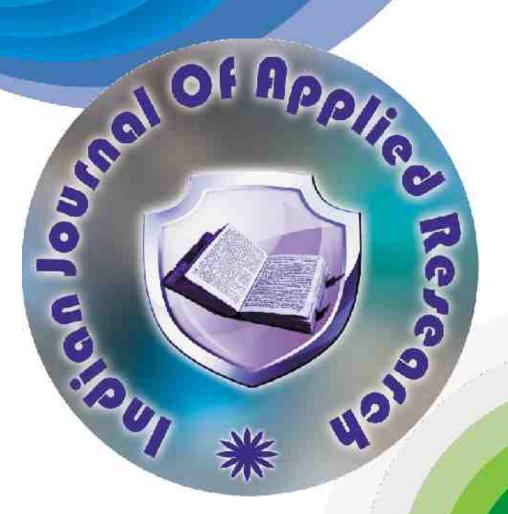
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Research Paper

Medical Science



Epidural Steroid In Low Back Ache

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ABSTRACT

Overall results of present study have shown that epidural steroid therapy in selected cases of low back ache with or without radicular pain is a useful and innocuous therapeutic measure to relieve pain. The combination of Triamcinolone acetate and Bupivicaine 0.5% produces better results (76%) in present series

Out of 50 patients 25 (50) % were totally relieved, 13 patients (26%) got sufficient relief of pain but needed lumber support. There were only 12 patient (24%) who did not respond this therapy.

Mechanism of action of this injection, there has been much speculation, keeping in view the small quantity of fluid injected in our series the therapeutic effect is mainly due to effect of drugs rather than mechanical advantage of breaking adhesions etc. , it seems logical to assume that strong anti-inflammatory effect of steroids can be utilized best by epidural injection of long acting steroid and long acting anaesthetic.

Keywords: Epidural steroid, Triamcinolone, Bupivicaine, Sciatica

Review

which was performed using the caudal approach was performed in 1901, when cocaine was injected to treat lumbago and sciatica. According to reports, epidurals from the 1920s-1940s involved using high volumes of normal saline and local anesthetics. Injection of corticosteroids into the epidural space for the management of lumbar radicular pain was first recorded in 1952¹¹

Various forms of treatment have been tried for low back ache with no definite conclusion as to what is the best. ^{3,8} The concept of epidural injection for relieving back ache by using large volumes of normal saline and local anesthetics in the form of extradural injections is not new. ^{4,11} Also, epidural steroid injection for low back ache has been used by various investigators. ^{5,6,12}

Materal And Methods

This study was under taken in orthopaedics department, S.P. Medical college and associate group of hospital, Bikaner to determine efficacy of epidural steroid injection for low back ache patients.

For this, study from the backache clinic 50 cases presenting with acute Lumbo-sciatic pain, chronic or resistant low back ache with sciatica, recurrent cases of back pain with sciatica already treated by conservative or surgical methods but still complaining of pain, were selected for the injection therapy.

All patients were already examined clinically and investigated to rule out infection or neoplasm as a cause of pain.

A mixture of 40 mg. of Triamcinolone acetate , 10 ml. of 0.5% Bupivicaine and 10 ml. of normal saline of distilled water was injection into the epidural space through sacral hiatus.

Patients were either kept in the hospital or sent home with the advice to take rest for $24\,\mathrm{hours}$.

All patients were reviewed at weekly intervals to assess relief in pain, stiffness of back and improvement in S.L.R. If no relief, injections were repeated at weekly intervals and maximum of three injections were given. Cases were followed regularly for a period of three to six months from the date of first epidural injection

To evaluate final functional results patients were divided into three groups1 those suffering from severe Lumbo-sciatic pain for the first time (acute group)2 those complaining of continuous pain of varying intensity of long duration (chromic group), and those3 complaining of recurrent attacks of pain and had treatment with relief previously (Recurrent).

Table I Treatment given prior to Epidural injection

| ſ | S.No | No. of patients | | Percentage |
|---|--|--|----|------------|
| | 1. | Bed rest with analgesics | 16 | 32% |
| | 2. | Bed rest, Analgesics and traction etc. | 13 | 26% |
| ĺ | Analgesics, exercises and lumber support | | 12 | 24% |
| ſ | 4. | Surgery | 3 | 6% |
| ſ | 5. | No treatment | 6 | 12% |
| | | Total | 50 | 100% |

The result of treatment were classified as:

Excellent -Patient was completely relieved of his/her symptoms and returned to previous job:

Good - Patient recovered sufficiently but needed some form of assistance like lumbar support and mild analgesics to resume work.

Poor - When patient had no relief.

Table-II-Results of Epidural Therapy

| Groups | Total no. of Patient | Excellent | RESULTS Good | Poor |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| I-Acute group | 8 | 4 (50%) | 2 (25%) | 2 (25%) |
| II-Chronic group | 25 | 11 (44%) | 7 (28%) | 7 (28%) |
| III-Recurrent roup | 17 | 10 (59%) | 4 (24%) | 3 (17%) |
| Total | 50 | 25 (50%) | 13 (26%) | 12 (24%) |

Observation

Out of 50 cases treated by epidural steroid injections, male female ratio was 2:3. The age of these patients varied from 25-70 years.

Sciatica (Radicular pain) was present in 24 patients (48%), neurological deficit in 7 patients (14%), 3 patients (6%) had only sensory deficit, and 4 patients (8%) had sensory deficit with varying degrees of EHL weakness.

Duration of symptoms varied form few days to three years. One case treated with epidural steroid injections developed vasovagal attack.

Discussion

Over all results of present study have shown that epidural steroid therapy in selected cases of low back ache with or without radicular pain is a useful and innocuous therapeutic measure to relieve pain. The combination of Triamcinolone acetate and Bupivicaine 0.5% produces better results (76%) in present series) than other combinations used by various authors4. George Wallace et al 3 stated that epidural

injections through lumbar route produced better results by depositing the drug close to the site of lesion, though the success rate was 51 percent.

Best results were obtained in patients having recurrent attacks of low back pain (59%) followed by patient with acute pain (50%) and lastly by patients suffering from chronic low back pain (44%).

Out of 50 patients, 25 (50%) were totally relieved and did not require any further treatment, 13 patients (26%) got sufficient relief of pain but needed either occasional lumbar traction or lumbar support to carry on their normal day-to-day activities. There were only 12 patients (24%) who did not respond to this method of treatment. One patient (2%) in recurrent group had Discectomy later on.

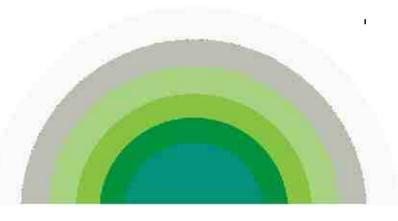
As regards mechanism of action of this injection, there has been much speculation, keeping in view the small quantity of fluid injected in our series the therapeutic effect is mainly due to effect of drugs rather than mechanical advantage of breaking adhesions etc. 3. Based on the theory that the cause of pain is inflammation in majority of cased rather than pressure on nerve roots5, it seems logical to assume that strong anti-inflammatory effect of steroids can be utilized best by epidural injection of long acting steroid and long acting Anaesthetic.

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