

Transverses abdominis plane block after laparoscopic surgery- Effect of Dexmedetomidine as an adjuvant to levobupivacaine

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Abstract

Aim: Transversus abdominis plane (TAP) block have been used for postoperative pain relief in abdominal surgeries. This trial was done to evaluate the analgesic potency of dexmedetomidine as an additive to levobupivacaine in TAP block in patients after laparoscopic surgery.

Methods: A randomised study was done in 60 patients undergoing laparoscopic surgery. All patients were randomised to two groups of 30 each. Group L received a total volume of 20ml of 0.25% levobupivacaine and group LD received 20 ml of 0.25% levobupivacaine with 1µg/kg dexmedetomidine in bilateral TAP block postoperatively. Time to first rescue analgesic was primary aim of our study. Secondary aims were total analgesic consumption, VAS score, hemodynamic and any complications.

Results: Requirement of first analgesic was delayed in LD group versus L group which was statistically significant. Total analgesics(paracetamol) used in first 24 h was more in L group compared to LD group which was statistically significant. VAS scores were low in LD group contrary to L group postoperatively which was statistically significant.

Conclusion: Dexmedetomidine as adjuvant to levobupivacaine in TAP block prolongs the time to first rescue analgesic request and reduces the total analgesic used in postoperative period in laparoscopic surgery.

Keywords: Dexmedetomidine, levobupivacaine, transverses abdominis plane block, laparoscopic

Introduction

Alleviation of postoperative pain is very important to provide early ambulation, decrease analgesic requirement, duration of hospitalization and to reduce postoperative morbidity. Many pharmacological and nonpharmacological methods are there to manage the postoperative pain but none has been found ideal.¹ In last few years transversus abdominis plane (TAP) block has been used for pain management after abdominal surgeries under general anaesthesia.² In a meta analysis by Sidiqi et al³, they opined that TAP block provides prolonged analgesia and reduces the consumption of opioids in the postoperative period without any side effects. As bupivacaine is more cardio and neuro toxic, levobupivacaine, is the commonly used local anesthetic in regional anaesthesia.⁴ But it has got shorter duration of action compared to bupivacaine. So adjuvants like opioids, dexamethasone, magnesium sulphate, ketamine and dexmedetomidine have been used for prolonging the duration of blockade, but each one had its own side effects like sedation,

nausea & vomiting etc.⁵ α_2 – adrenergic receptors agonist like dexmedetomidine have been used for its sedative, analgesic, and anesthesia sparing effects. Dexmedetomidine has proved its efficacy in prolonging the duration of local anaesthetics in various regional blocks.⁶ There were few studies in literature using dexmedetomidine as additive to levobupivacaine in TAP block. Our trial was designed to measure the potency of dexmedetomidine when used as adjuvant to levobupivacaine in TAP block for pain management. Time to first rescue analgesic request was primary aim of our trial. Secondary aims were total analgesic consumption, VAS score, and any complications.

Methods

Approval from the institutional ethical committee and written informed consent from the patients were obtained. This prospective, randomized trial was done on 60 patients of ASA I & II, which were posted for laparoscopic surgeries at a tertiary care hospital in Odisha. Patient refused for inclusion, any history of allergy to local anaesthetic or dexmedetomidine, BMI >25kg/m², coagulation disorders, pregnancy, chronic renal diseases and local block site infection were excluded from the study. The study population were randomly divided using computer generated randomization in to 2 groups of 30 patients in each group. Allocation concealment was done by serially numbered opaque envelop method. Group L received 20 ml of levobupivacaine 0.25% and group LD received 20 ml of levobupivacaine 0.25% + (1 μ g/kg dexmedetomidine diluted up to 1ml of normal saline. During pre anaesthetic check up, patients were assessed for any illness and all required laboratory investigations were checked. TAP block procedure and visual analog scale (VAS) for pain assessment was explained to all the patients. The patients were given Tab Alprazolam 0.5 mg and Tab Ranitidine 150 mg at bed time on the night before surgery. Baseline pulse rate, blood pressure and SPO₂ were recorded. 18 G IV cannula was put and Ringers Lactate was started. All patients received standard general anaesthesia in supine position. Patients were premedicated with inj Glycopyrrolate 0.005mg/Kg IV, Inj Midazolam 0.05 mg/Kg IV and Inj Pentazocin 0.5 mg/Kg IV. Anaesthesia was induced with Inj Propofol 2 mg/Kg IV and endotracheal intubation facilitated with Inj Vecuronium 0.1 mg/Kg IV. Anaesthesia was maintained with N₂O, O₂ and Isoflurane and surgery was allowed. At the end of surgery, TAP block was given using midaxillary approach in all patients. A high – frequency (5-10MHz) ultrasound linear probe was transversely located on the anterolateral abdominal wall in mid axillary line between the lower costal margin and the iliac crest. Neurovascular plane between the internal oblique and transverse abdominis muscle were identified. A 50 mm nerve block needle was introduced in the plane of ultrasound probe directly under the probe and advanced until it reaches the plane between internal oblique and transverse abdominis muscle. After negative aspiration study drug was injected. The study drug was observed on ultrasound to be distributed in a dark oval form and the plane appears as hypochoic space. Then residual block was reversed with Inj Neostigmine 0.05mg/kg IV & Inj Glycopyrrolate 0.01mg/kg. After extubation, patients were transferred to the post anesthesia care unit (PACU). Time to request first analgesics, rescue analgesia requirements were recorded. Heart Rate (HR), MAP (mean arterial pressure) and SPO₂ were assessed. Assessment of pain was done on visual analogue scale “VAS” (0=no pain and 10= worst possible pain). All the patients were administered IV Paracetamol (15mg/kg) as rescue analgesic when postoperative VAS score > 4. It was recorded at

20min,40min,1hr,3hr,6hr,9hr,12hr,15hr,18hr,21hr and 24th hr in postoperative period. All the patients sedation was assessed using Ramsay Sedation Score. Any complications like post operative nausea and vomiting were recorded. A MAP decrease of more than 20 percent from the baseline was taken as hypotension which was managed by reducing isoflurane concentration and injecting ephedrine 6mg iv. Heart rate less than 60 beats per minute was considered to be bradycardia, and 0.6 mg of atropine IV was administered in such cases. Sample size calculation was based on an initial pilot study involving ten patients with 'time needed for first rescue analgesic' as the primary end point of the study. Time to first analgesic request was 3.29 ± 0.51 hrs in levobupivacaine group and 6.72 ± 0.49 hrs in levobupivacaine-dexmedetomidine group. With α error of 0.05 and power of the study ($1 - \alpha^2$) at 80%, to detect a minimum of 120 min difference in time needed for rescue analgesia between the two groups, the sample size was calculated to be approximately 28 in each group. We included thirty patients in each group to compensate for possible dropouts. The patients, who were part of the pilot study, were not included in the study. The patients' characteristics and block profile were categorized and analyzed appropriately using student's unpaired *t*-test and Chi-square test. A $P < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant.

Results

64 patients were enrolled in the study. The demographic profile were similar in both the groups. The mean time to first analgesic request 3.5 ± 0.83 hours hours in group L and 6.96 ± 0.79 hours in group LD.($P < 0.05$) (fig 1)The total dose of paracetamol consumed in 24 hours was 2.8 ± 0.49 gm in group L group and 1.15 ± 0.7 gm in group LD.($P < 0.05$) (fig 2)At different time intervals, VAS scores were significantly lower in the Group LD compared to the group L. ($p < 0.05$)(fig 3) There was no remarkable difference regarding nausea, vomiting, and sedation between the two groups. (Table 1)

Figure 1: Time to first analgesia request

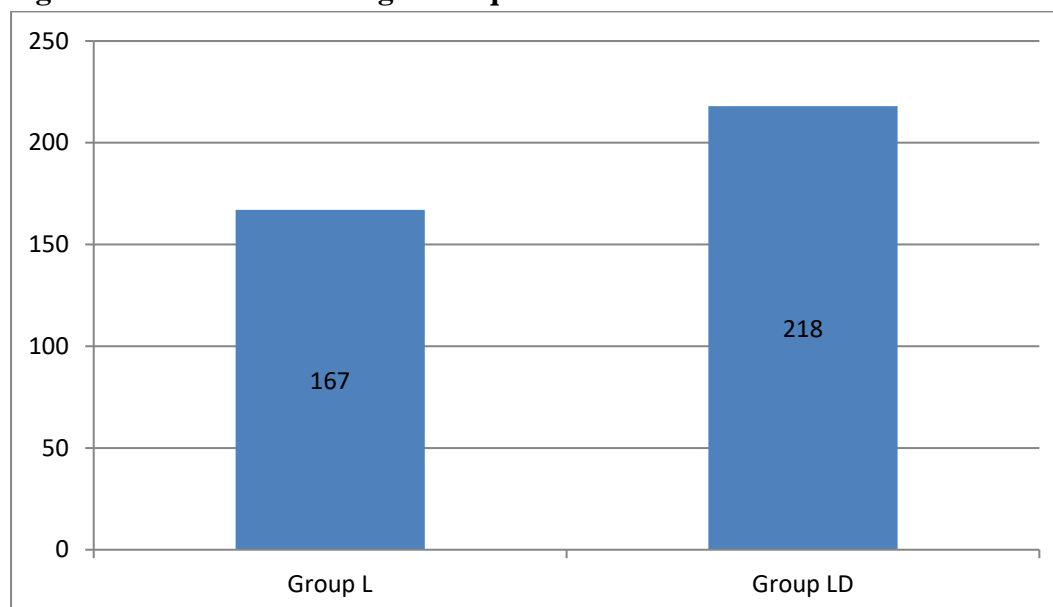
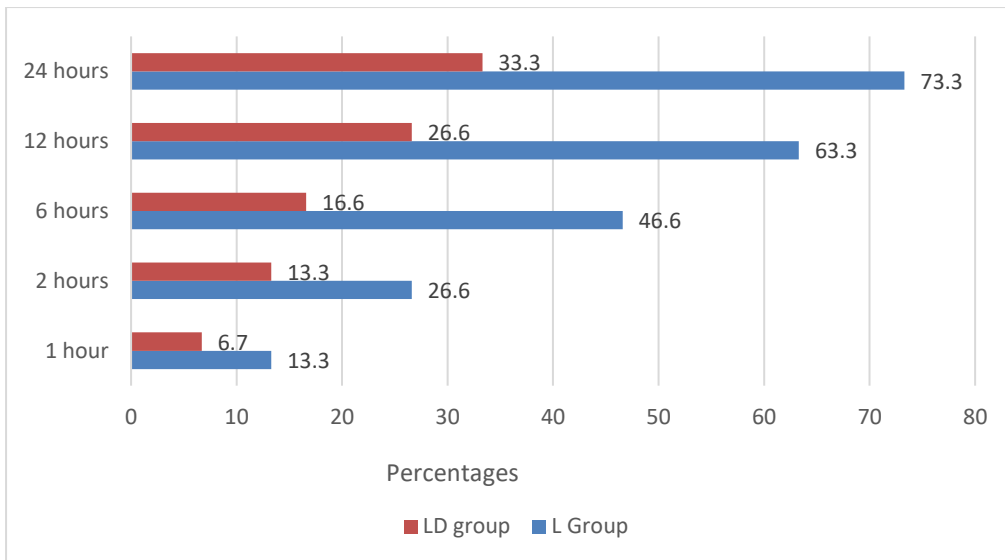


Figure 2: Total analgesic consumption in 24 hrs



Values expressed as Mean±SD, SD: Standard deviation. Student’s t-test and Chi-square test applied. P<0.05 is significant

Fig 3: Post operative VAS scores

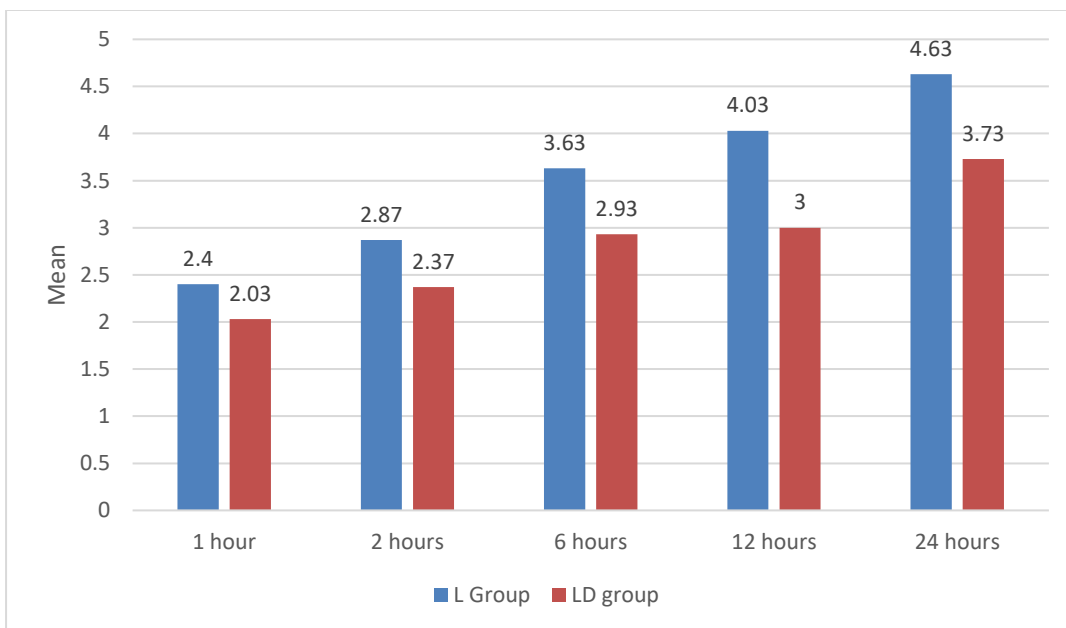


Table 1: Incidence of PONV and sedation

	Group L (n=30)	Group LD (n=30)	P value
Nausea	2	2	0.219
Vomiting	1	1	0.247
Sedation	3	3	0.278

Discussion

This trial concluded that dexmedetomidine when used as adjuvant to levobupivacaine in TAP block produced prolonged analgesia, low VAS score and reduced total requirement of rescue analgesic in postoperative period compared to levobupivacaine alone with fewer side effects. In a systematic review and meta-analysis, Abdallah et al.⁷ studied the effect of TAP block on intravenous morphine consumption in the post operative period. They concluded that morphine consumption was reduced, VAS pain scores were low with prolonged analgesia in the TAP block. McDonnell et al.⁸ studied efficacy of transversus abdominis plane(TAP) block in caesarean section on postoperative analgesia. They found low VAS scores, low total morphine requirement and lower incidence of sedation, in postoperative period. Singh et al.⁹ used clonidine as adjuvant to bupivacaine for TAP block in caesarean delivery. They opined that, clonidine produced prolonged postoperative analgesia, lower consumption of rescue analgesia with higher satisfaction score compared to bupivacaine alone. Neethirajan et al.¹⁰ in his study opined that the addition of dexmedetomidine to bupivacaine in TAP block delayed the requirement of rescue analgesia, and reduced rescue analgesic consumption in comparison with bupivacaine alone which was similar to our study. In another study, Chen et al.¹¹ analysed the analgesic efficacy of dexmedetomidine and fentanyl when added to ropivacaine as adjuvant in TAP block elective gynaecological patients. They opined that dexmedetomidine provided prolonged postoperative analgesia along with better recovery compared to fentanyl. Almarakbi et al.¹² in his study of TAP block in abdominal hysterectomy found that dexmedetomidine as adjuvant to bupivacaine produced lesser VAS score and prolonged analgesia in comparison to bupivacaine alone in postoperative period which is in agreement with our study. Shehab et al.¹³ in his trial of TAP block in abdominal and pelvic cancer surgery, revealed that dexmedetomidine with bupivacaine in TAP block provided prolonged analgesia and reduced analgesic consumption postoperatively which was in agreement with our study. Ramya et al.¹⁴ studied TAP block after caesarean section and opined that the addition of dexmedetomidine as additive to bupivacaine in TAP block delayed the 1st request of analgesia. It also produced low VAS score and reduced the opioid requirement in the postoperative period which was in agreement with our study. Aksu et al.¹⁵ studied the effect of dexmedetomidine as adjuvant to bupivacaine in TAP block in abdominal surgery and opined that dexmedetomidine provided low VAS score in the 1st 8 hours after surgery. Dexmedetomidine also reduced the requirement of rescue analgesia in this period without any side effects which was in agreement with our study. Therefore, dexmedetomidine can be a effective adjuvant with levobupivacaine in transversus abdominis plane(TAP) block for effective and prolonged analgesia postoperatively in gynecological laparoscopic surgeries.

Conclusion

Dexmedetomidine when used as adjuvant to levobupivacaine in TAP block in laparoscopic surgeries not only delayed the time to 1st rescue analgesia requirement but also reduced total analgesic consumption during postoperative 24 hours without any side effects.

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