Simulation-Based Assessment of Awareness in Medical Students and Anesthesia Providers to Race Differences in Propofol Pharmacodynamics

Samsun Lampotang, PhD; David E. Lildas, BSME; Hartmut Derendorf, PhD; Nikolaus Gravenstein, MD; Benjamin Lok, PhD; and John P. Quarles, PhD

Department of Anesthesiology, University of Florida College of Medicine, Gainesville, FL
Department of Computer Science, University of Texas, San Antonio, TX

Background

Racial variability to propofol anesthesia has been described [1,2]. In the context of precision medicine, we hypothesized that patient race would be taken into account, especially when administering a potent drug such as propofol for sedation. We performed a simulator-based drug administration study to evaluate awareness in medical students and in anesthesia providers of racial differences in propofol sensitivity.

Methods

Study 1. Medical Students. We adapted pharmacodynamics data on race and propofol [1,2] to scale the loss and recovery of consciousness (LOC, ROC) thresholds in the FEchner propofol model [3] for different racial groups, based on personal communication from Dr. Fechner that the data were from Caucasian patients. Using Caucasians as the norm (1.0), the mean propofol consumption to achieve similar bispectral index values was set for African Americans at 0.82 and for South Asians (from the Indian subcontinent) at 0.78, and the mean time to eye opening from propofol anesthesia was set for African Americans at 1.6 and for South Asians at 1.9. We did not simulate inter-patient variability within a racial group. With IRB approval and informed consent, a convenience sample of twenty-two 2nd-, 3rd- and 4th-year medical students administered propofol sedation to a mixed reality simulator (male, 32 years old, 66.68 kg) for an upper GI endoscopy. The virtual physical appearance (Figure 1 below) and the programmed pharmacodynamics (PK/PD) were altered to represent 3 different races (South Asian (Indian), Caucasian, African American).

Study 2. Anesthesia Providers. Using a similar set up (Fig. 2) to Study 1, anesthesia providers interacted with a mannequin (verbal commands, jaw thrusts, trapezius squeeze, mask ventilation, supplemental O2), the virtual representation (Fig. 2) depicted movements, eyelid closing, breathing, moaning, facial features, and vital signs monitoring (SpO2, ETCO2, NIBP, EKG). Based on published data [2,4,5], propofol pharmacodynamics were altered to exhibit increased sensitivity in the following order: Caucasians [4], Blacks [2], and Indians [5] by progressively lowering propofol effect site concentrations for loss of consciousness (LOC, no response to verbal commands). With IRB approval, 37 consented anesthesia providers each administered propofol sedation for upper GI endoscopy to three consecutive simulated male patients (Caucasian, Indian, Black, otherwise similar).

Figure 1. Virtual patients. Left to right: Caucasian, Indian, Black

Figure 2. Set-up for study 2 with anesthesia providers

Results

Study 1. Medical Students. LOC duration, as a measure of over-sedation, was significantly higher for the African-American (P=0.003) and Indian (P<0.05) patients compared to Caucasian patients. Patients from races with known sensitivity to propofol were over-sedated (Table 1).

Study 2. Anesthesia Providers. 23 males and 14 females participated (13 faculty, 10 residents, 8 nurse anesthetists, 3 fellows, 3 anesthesia assistant students). Results are reported as range, mean ± SD. Age: 28-68, 38 ± 10.1 years; experience delivering propofol sedation: 1-20, 6.8 ± 5.9 years. Loading doses of propofol were Caucasian, 0.27-1.71, 0.77 ± 0.31 mg/kg; Indian, 0.20-1.71, 0.80 ± 0.32 mg/kg; and Black, 0.25-1.71, 0.79 ± 0.28 mg/kg. Time durations of over-sedation (LOC) were Caucasian, 0-318, 147 ± 85 s; Indian, 26-338, 207 ± 68 s; and Black, 0.367, 191 ± 81 s. Between patient races, there was no significant difference in loading doses (p = 0.58) or significant differences in LOC duration (p = 0.14). On average, Caucasians spent significantly less time over-sedated than Blacks (p = 0.0003) or Indians (p = 0.005), Table 2.

Table 1. Results: Medical students as study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Time duration of loss of consciousness (s)</th>
<th>Total propofol administered (mg/kg)</th>
<th>LOC duration (s, range, mean ± SD)</th>
<th>Time to recovery (s, range, mean ± SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>0.16 ± 0.27</td>
<td>1.16 ± 0.27</td>
<td>0.318 ± 0.27</td>
<td>269 ± 701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.77 ± 0.31</td>
<td>1.95 ± 0.41</td>
<td>147 ± 85</td>
<td>444 ± 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0.79 ± 0.28</td>
<td>1.59 ± 0.41</td>
<td>191 ± 81</td>
<td>508 ± 177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Results: Anesthesia providers as study participants

Conclusions

Our data indicate that both study participant groups (medical students and anesthesia providers) lacked awareness of the racial variability in the response to propofol. It suggests a need for education and training in racial variability to drugs and racially adapted PK/PD models that vary based on the race of the simulated patient for pragmatic precision medicine in the form of race-based dosing. We recently developed such a point of care app for race-based propofol dosing that runs on mobile phones and is available at http://vam.anest.ufl.edu/WebSims/propofolsim/mobile/.

References


Acknowledgments

Research reported in this publication was supported in part by the National Library of Medicine Division of the National Institutes of Health (NH/NIHLMR1211MID08293 (31A3)) and by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under award numbers UL1TR00064 and UL1TR001427. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. The authors report no conflicts of interests or disclosures.