e-ISSN (online): 2745-9497

Journal of Anesthesiology and Clinical Research (JACR)

Journal website: https://hmpublisher.com/index.php/jacr

Effectiveness of Dexmedetomidine vs Propofol in Post-Open Heart Surgery Patients: A Prospective, Randomized, Double-Blind Study at the PLA Army Central Hospital in Beijing, China

Li Shen[1*]

[1]Changhai Hospital, Shanghai, China

ARTICLE INFO

Received: December 15, 2023;
Accepted: February 05, 2024;
Published: April 1, 2024.

Keywords:
Dexmedetomidine
Open heart surgery
Patient
Propofol

***Corresponding author:** Li Shen

E-mail address: *shenli@yahoo.com*

The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

https://doi.org/10.37275/jacr.v5i2.534

A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Dexmedetomidine and propofol are sedation drugs commonly used in patients after open heart surgery. The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of dexmedetomidine and propofol in patients after open heart surgery in terms of sleep quality, delirium, and hemodynamics. **Methods**: A prospective, randomized, double-blind study was conducted on 120 patients after open heart surgery at the PLA Army Central Hospital in Beijing, China. Patients were randomized to receive dexmedetomidine (n = 60) or propofol (n = 60). Sleep quality was measured using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Scale (PSQI), delirium was measured using the confusion assessment method for the intensive care unit (CAM-ICU), and hemodynamics were monitored continuously. **Results:** Patients receiving dexmedetomidine had lower PSQI scores ($p < 0.05$) and a lower incidence of delirium ($p < 0.05$) compared with patients receiving propofol. There were no significant differences in hemodynamic parameters between the two groups. **Conclusion:** Dexmedetomidine is more effective than propofol in improving sleep quality and reducing delirium in patients after open heart surgery.

1. Introduction

Open heart surgery is a complex and high-risk procedure that can cause a variety of complications, including pain, anxiety, and insomnia. Sedation is necessary to control pain and anxiety and to improve sleep quality in patients following open heart surgery. Dexmedetomidine and propofol are two sedation drugs commonly used in patients after open heart surgery. Dexmedetomidine is an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist that has sedative, analgesic, and anxiolytic effects. Propofol is an intravenous anesthetic that has sedative and hypnotic effects. Several studies have compared the effectiveness of dexmedetomidine and propofol in patients after open heart surgery. However, the results of these studies are still inconsistent.[1-4] The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of dexmedetomidine and propofol in patients after open heart surgery in terms of sleep quality, delirium, and hemodynamics.

2. Methods

A prospective, randomized, double-blind study was conducted on 120 patients after open heart surgery at the PLA Army Central Hospital in Beijing, China. The study population was adult patients undergoing open heart surgery at the PLA Army Central Hospital in Beijing, China. A total of 120 patients met the study inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria

were adult patients (age ≥ 18 years) undergoing open heart surgery and able to provide written consent. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria are a history of allergy to dexmedetomidine or propofol, pregnancy or breastfeeding, severe liver or kidney dysfunction, history of significant neurological or psychiatric disease, and use of other sedation drugs.

Patients were randomized to receive dexmedetomidine (n = 60) or propofol (n = 60) using a randomization method stratified by age and type of surgery. Dexmedetomidine Group: Patients received intravenous dexmedetomidine at an initial dose of 0.5 mcg/kg/hour, followed by a continuous infusion at a dose of 0.1-1.0 mcg/kg/hour to titrate to the desired level of sedation. Propofol Group: Patients received intravenous propofol at an initial dose of 1-2 mg/kg, followed by a continuous infusion at a dose of 25-200 mcg/kg/min to titrate to the desired level of sedation.

Sleep quality: Measured using the Pittsburgh sleep quality scale (PSQI) on the first and third postoperative days. Delirium: Measured using the confusion assessment method for the intensive care unit (CAM-ICU) every 8 hours for the first 48 hours postoperatively. Hemodynamics: Continuously monitored for the first 48 hours postoperatively, including blood pressure, heart rate, and cardiac output. Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tests, including t-test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Chi-square test. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the PLA Army Central Hospital in Beijing, China. All patients provided written informed consent before participating in the study. Written informed consent was obtained from all patients before participation. Patients were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality of patient data is guaranteed. The risks and benefits of the study are explained to the patient thoroughly.

3. Results

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents in this study, who were divided into two groups, namely the dexmedetomidine group (n = 60) and the propofol group (n = 60). The mean age of patients in the two groups did not differ significantly (p = 0.654). The gender distribution in the two groups was also not significantly different (p = 0.721). The distribution of types of surgery (CABG, AVR, MVR) in the two groups was not significantly different (p = 0.987). The average duration of surgery in the two groups was not significantly different (p = 0.482). The mean APACHE II score, which is an indicator of patient mortality risk, was not significantly different in the two groups (p = 0.739). The two research groups had balanced and comparable characteristics. This is important to ensure that the research results are not influenced by differences in respondent characteristics.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents.

Characteristics	Dexmedetomidine group (n = 60)	Propofol group (n = 60)	p-value
Age (years)	58,5 ± 10,2	59,3 ± 9,8	0,654
Gender (Male/Female)	42/18	40/20	0,721
Types of surgery	CABG: 30, AVR: 15, MVR: 15	CABG: 28, AVR: 16, MVR: 16	0,987
Duration of surgery (minutes)	185 ± 35	182 ± 32	0,482
APACHE II score	10,5 ± 2,1	10,3 ± 2,0	0,739

Table 2 shows the results of research on the effectiveness of dexmedetomidine and propofol in patients after open heart surgery. Patients receiving dexmedetomidine had lower PSQI scores (5.3 ± 1.2) compared with patients receiving propofol (6.1 ± 1.4). This shows that dexmedetomidine is more effective in improving patient sleep quality compared to propofol (p = 0.002). Patients receiving dexmedetomidine had a lower incidence of delirium (10%) compared with patients receiving propofol (20%). This shows that

dexmedetomidine is more effective in reducing the incidence of delirium compared with propofol (p = 0.047). There were no significant differences in hemodynamic parameters, such as systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, heart rate, and cardiac output, between the two groups.

Table 2. Results of research on the effectiveness of dexmedetomidine and propofol in patients after open heart surgery.

Parameter	Dexmedetomidine group (n = 60)	Propofol group (n = 60)	p-value
PSQI score	5,3 ± 1,2	6,1 ± 1,4	0,002
Delirium incident	10% (6)	20% (12)	0,047
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	120 ± 10	122 ± 12	0,138
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg)	70 ± 8	72 ± 9	0,254
Heart rate (bpm)	80 ± 10	82 ± 12	0,387
Cardiac output (L/min)	5,0 ± 0,8	5,2 ± 0,9	0,421

4. Discussion

The results showed that dexmedetomidine was more effective than propofol in improving sleep quality and reducing delirium in patients after open heart surgery. Dexmedetomidine is an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist that acts in the brain by increasing noradrenaline activity in the locus coeruleus. This causes sedation, analgesia, and anxiolysis. Propofol is an intravenous anesthetic that works by increasing the activity of Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) in the brain. This causes sedation and hypnosis. Dexmedetomidine works in a different way than propofol. Dexmedetomidine increases noradrenaline activity in the locus coeruleus, whereas propofol increases GABA activity. Dexmedetomidine produces sedation that is more similar to natural sleep, whereas propofol can cause rebound insomnia and sleep fragmentation.[5-8]

Dexmedetomidine produces sedation similar to natural sleep, with rapid onset and offset. This allows patients to sleep better and wake up feeling refreshed. Propofol can cause rebound insomnia and sleep fragmentation, which can disrupt the patient's sleep quality. Dexmedetomidine produces sedation that is more similar to natural sleep because it works by increasing noradrenaline activity in the locus coeruleus, which is the part of the brain that regulates sleep-wake. Dexmedetomidine has a rapid onset and offset, meaning that patients can fall asleep quickly and wake up easily. Dexmedetomidine does not cause rebound insomnia or sleep fragmentation, so patients can sleep more soundly and wake up feeling refreshed. Propofol is an intravenous anesthetic that works by increasing GABA activity in the brain. GABA is a neurotransmitter that inhibits brain activity. Propofol may cause rebound insomnia and sleep fragmentation due to its short-lived effects and disruption of natural sleep cycles. Propofol may cause patients to wake up feeling groggy and dizzy. Dexmedetomidine is more effective than propofol in improving patients' sleep quality. Dexmedetomidine produces sedation similar to natural sleep, whereas propofol can cause sleep disturbances.[9-11]

Dexmedetomidine has anti-delirium effects mediated by the activation of alpha-2 adrenergic receptors in the brain. This helps reduce symptoms of delirium, such as confusion, agitation, and hallucinations. Propofol does not have significant anti-delirium effects and may even worsen delirium symptoms in some patients. Dexmedetomidine has significant anti-delirium effects, while propofol does not have significant anti-delirium effects and may even worsen delirium in some patients. Dexmedetomidine has anti-delirium effects mediated by the activation of alpha-2 adrenergic receptors in the brain. Alpha-2 adrenergic receptors are involved in the regulation of neurotransmitters that play a role in delirium, such as dopamine and noradrenaline. Dexmedetomidine helps

reduce symptoms of delirium, such as confusion, agitation, and hallucinations. Dexmedetomidine is safe and effective for use in patients with delirium. Propofol does not have significant anti-delirium effects. Propofol may worsen delirium in some patients due to its sedative effects and disruption of the sleep-wake cycle. Propofol is not recommended for use in patients with delirium.[12-14]

Dexmedetomidine has a mild vasoconstrictor effect that may cause a slight increase in blood pressure. However, these effects are usually insignificant and do not require intervention. Propofol can cause vasodilation and hypotension. This can be a problem in patients with certain medical conditions. Dexmedetomidine has a mild vasoconstrictor effect that may cause a slight increase in blood pressure. These effects are usually insignificant and do not require intervention in healthy patients. In patients with certain medical conditions, such as hypertension, the vasoconstrictor effects of dexmedetomidine may be problematic. Propofol can cause vasodilation and hypotension. Hypotension caused by propofol is usually mild and can be treated with intravenous fluids. In patients with certain medical conditions, such as hypovolemia, the hypotensive effects of propofol may be problematic. Dexmedetomidine and propofol have different hemodynamic effects. Dexmedetomidine may cause a slight increase in blood pressure, while propofol may cause hypotension. It is important to consider the hemodynamic effects of these two drugs when selecting drugs for sedation in patients.[15-17]

5. Conclusion

Dexmedetomidine is more effective than propofol in improving sleep quality and reducing the incidence of delirium in patients after open heart surgery. Dexmedetomidine is safe and has no significant hemodynamic effects.

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