

Introduction

The aim of these guidelines is to reduce the variety of analgesic and sedation procedures in intensive care units (ICU) so to assure the patient the fulfillment of the right to analgesia and reach an adequate state of sedation with complete control over possible side effects and maximizing the beneficial effects of all the techniques adopted during the days of artificial ventilation and the whole stay in the ICU. It is really very relevant to control diurnal rhythm, delirium and psychiatric symptoms associated and procedural pain.

It seems important to underline that the inversion of word order from "sedation-analgesia" to "analgo-sedation" corresponds to a different cultural attitude which recognizes, even in the ICU, the interruption of the neuroendocrine/metabolic cascade as the starting point which takes place when there is pain, and that could be followed, using the appropriate drugs, by the control of the anxious component or that could be laid on a certain level of hypnosis. This will help to prevent the appearance of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), "the development of typical symptoms that follow the exposure to an extremely traumatic stressful event which involves direct personal experience; the event could concern the real risk of death or of a severe lesion or of any other danger which encroaches on physical integrity".¹

As has been asserted in the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (JCAHO) guidelines of 2002,² the aims of analgesia and sedation in ICU should be:

- adequate level of analgesia-anxiolysis-amnesia;
- reduction of the hormonal and metabolic responses to stress;
- avoiding sudden changes of consciousness;
- avoiding accidental extubation;
- facilitating adaptation to the ventilator;
- avoiding increases in intracranial pressure (ICP);

— reducing the use of neuromuscular blocking drugs.

In some patients and even more in polytrauma patients, the use of regional analgesia is recommended, possibly in combination with *i.v.* analgo-sedation.

Materials and methods

A methodical review of all the literature available has been carried out, through a manual research and through the main research sites (MedLine, PubMed 1970-2005).

Meta-analyses and clinical controlled trials have been estimated in detail, as well as all the guidelines about the subject available at the moment: Society of Critical care Medicine (SCCM)³ and Société Française d'Anesthésie et de Réanimation (SFAR).⁴

The recommendations were worked out by the research team through the Delphi method.⁵

The research team adopted the methodology suggested by the Guidelines National Programme (PNLG, www.pnlg.it).⁶

The recommendations were graduated (A, B, C, D, E) or Delphi modified on the basis of the quality of evidence (Table I).

The verbal gradation (essential, advisable, not advisable) of these recommendations reflects the personal opinion of the team too.

Recommendations

Pain evaluation in the adult patient in intensive care units

"All critically ill patients have the right to adequate analgesia and management of their pain." (Grade of recommendation=A)³

Pain control in the ICU is not often considered as a priority, especially in haemodynamically more unstable patients, even if these patients are more vulnerable to pain. It has been shown that methodical documentation and pain evaluation produce an improvement in the quality of pain treat-

— the behavioral pain scale¹⁴ with a score variable from 3 to 12, it consents to modulate the pain treatment in agreement with the variations of the score.

Integration of the behavioral evaluations and of the physiological parameters can establish a valid method for pain evaluation in the patient who cannot communicate. The development of a method for pain evaluation in ICUs, which includes both one-dimensional evaluation methods and behavioral and physiological analyses to be utilized depending on the conditions of the patient seems to be desirable.

An important cause of pain in ICUs is in relation to the procedures; this kind of pain has been defined as "an unpleasant experience from the sensorial and emotional point of view which comes from the real or potential lesion associated with diagnostic or therapeutic procedures". As for surgical pain, procedural pain is a kind of acute inflammatory pain which is related to a specific cause and a well known interval of time. Not too much is known about the behavioral answers of the patient who undergoes a procedure in the field of critical medicine. The variability of the procedural pain has been examined in a group of about 6 000 patients admitted to 169 centers, in critically ill patients who underwent 6 procedures:¹⁵ mobilization of the patient, central venous catheter (CVC) insertion, removal of drains from the surgical wound, bronchial suction and removal of the femoral catheter, listed in decreasing pain order. These observations are very important, because, though the personal impression of the pain observed by the patient represents the gold standard in pain evaluation, the tissue lesion and the consequent stress generate a wide train of behavioral observations measurable through the variations in facial expression, vocalization, retraction reflex from the stimulus. There is a significant association between the presence of pain during the procedure and the onset of a new behavior, above all stiffness and grimaces. The stronger the pain the more present and important would be the behavioral aspects indicative of pain.

It is necessary to insert pain among the parameters usually evaluated in the ICU:

— pain should usually be measured (every hour) and the response to the pain treatment should be controlled utilizing appropriate scales for each patient;

— the patient not able to communicate should be evaluated observing behavioral (movements, facial and postural expressions) and physiological (HR, BP, RR) variations linked to pain and evaluating how these parameters change with pain therapy.

To do this it seems necessary to improve physiopathological and pharmacological knowledge and improve specific training of the medical staff and even more of the nursing staff about pain evaluation methods and sedation in ICU.

Recommendations

It is essential that every unit should adopt at least one pain evaluation scale for patients able to communicate and one for patients who cannot communicate; it is essential that the pain evaluation be reported in the patient notes at fixed times, in the same way as other vital parameters, and during invasive procedures (grade D).

Sedation evaluation

Like pain control, sedation level control should be an integral part of the whole treatment of the patient admitted to the ICU and the reporting parameters should be registered with the same attention paid to cardiorespiratory parameters. A standard level of sedation which is perfect for each patient does not exist. International experts agree that the adequate sedation level is different for each patient, on the basis of specific clinical features. Therefore emphasis should be given to the concept of analgo-sedation individually reached, under the direct control and following the clinical principles of the ICU staff. The quality of sedation is considered adequate according to the percentage of

Recommendations

It is essential for every single unit to adopt at least one sedation evaluation scale; it is essential for sedation measurement to be registered in the notes at fixed times, in the same way as vital parameters (grade D).

Drugs

In an epidemiological study published in 2001¹⁹ regarding the use of sedatives and analgesics in Italian ICUs in the first week after admission in 1994, the authors reported that, out of 128 ICUs (about 30% of the adult ICUs in Italy), a total of 31 different drugs were used; during 64% of the admission days only 1 drug was used; the most prescribed was propofol followed by fentanyl and diazepam, while morphine was given for 14.8% of the days.

The same research group in 2002²⁰ published a multicenter study on the use of analgesics during the postoperative period of patients admitted to 128 Italian ICUs in a month. Of 661 patients, 49% didn't receive any opioid drug in the first 48 h of postoperative, more than 35% didn't receive any analgesic. The most used opioid drug was fentanyl followed by morphine and buprenorphine. Of 336 patients who received an opioid, 42% received only one administration a day in bolus; the opportunity to receive an opioid was even lower for patients in coma.

No one drug alone has all the desired effects for analgo-sedation in ICUs; the ideal drug should have:

- rapid onset;
- foreseeable activity length;
- no active metabolites;
- quick recovery after suspension;
- facility of titration;
- organ dependent metabolism;
- low pharmacological interaction;
- high therapeutic index;
- low cost.

PHARMACOKINETIC VARIATIONS IN THE CRITICALLY ILL PATIENT

The patient admitted to an ICU is a critically ill patient who can present hepatic and renal

problems and be very often elderly as well. All these factors change the pharmacokinetics of the drugs usually used for analgo-sedation, preventing a correct programming of the recovery time of the patient after the suspension of the drugs and promoting a continuous variability of the depth of the analgo-sedation.

Renal failure, for example, causes:

- reduction in the blood flow and glomerular filtration;
- increased volume of distribution;
- increased free fraction;
- accumulation of drugs and/or metabolites with renal excretion;
- prolonged effects.

Liver impairment is responsible for drug clearance variations because of:

- reduction in the blood flow to the liver;
- reduced liver enzyme activity;
- variations in plasma protein concentration.

In the critically ill patient a deteriorated proteic and enzymatic synthesis, an increased free not bound to proteins drug fraction, an increased volume of distribution, a reduction in blood flow to the liver because of total circulatory failure, spleen infarct, increased abdominal pressure could be found.

The elderly patient.—Old age influences both pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. In the elderly there is a reduction in the muscular mass and an increase in adipose tissue. The volume of distribution of the fat-soluble drugs like diazepam, midazolam, fentanyl and sufentanil increases, while that of not very fat insoluble drugs like paracetamol, morphine, and lorazepam decreases. A larger volume of distribution extends the elimination half-life and increases the length of the clinical effect of the drug. Albumin concentration decreases, while that of acute phase protein like alpha-acid glycoprotein increases. The hepatic and renal function decreases in the elderly; the reduction in blood flow to the liver is the reason for the reduced clearance for drugs with a high extraction rate (ER). Hepatic function deterioration contributes to increase drug elimination even more.²¹ In the elderly conscious sedation is

recommended, so that the patient is reactive, collaborative, not suffering. The risk of delirium during the weaning from each sedation protocol is higher than in other patients.

The obese patient.—In the obese patient protein binding, metabolism and renal excretion variations are described. Drugs with high affinity for adipose tissue have a larger volume of distribution and, especially by the continuous infusion method, accumulation events increase. Drugs hepatic clearance variations are very complex: the cytochrome P (CYP) 450 enzymatic system is deteriorated, while glucuronidations are increased.²²

ADMINISTRATION METHOD: CONTINUOUS ANALGO-SEDATION OR WITH INTERMITTENT BOLUS

Drug administration used for analgo-sedation can be done by bolus or continuous infusion. Both techniques have advantages and disadvantages, even if nowadays i.v. continuous infusion is the favorite administration form because it allows a more constant level of sedation without an elevated risk of excessive sedation.

Continuous infusion:

- assures a constant level of sedation, optimizing the patient's comfort with the risk of:
 - higher drug consumption;
 - excessive sedation risk;
 - longer recovery time.

The technique with intermittent bolus produces:

- a floating plasma concentration associated with inconstant levels of sedation;
- smaller drug consumption; with the risk of:
 - insufficient level of sedation.

The continuous infusion regimens are described as "variable continuous infusion", with the need for daily or more frequent changes, adapted to the variations in hemodynamic conditions and in the extraction organs (variability of the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics parameters) and in the diurnal rhythm. The adaptation of the target controlled infusion (TCI) methods for seda-

tives²³ and analgesics²⁴ for ICU patients are in phase of experimentation. The use of enteral administration for sedatives and major tranquillisers seems to be of speculative interest.²⁵

During weaning from the artificial ventilation, it is advisable to use analgo-sedation techniques that depress the respiratory drive as little as possible: gradual suspension of sedatives and maintenance of an adequate analgesic level. For management during analgo-sedation the use of a single venous route exclusively for these drugs is recommended, so to reduce the risk of hidden bolus. The planned regimen should not be suspended suddenly while carrying the patient for diagnostic examinations or transfers.

As for the length of analgo-sedation it is considered: of short time when it is equal to or less than 24 h, of average time when it lasts for 1-3 days, long time when it lasts for more than 3 days.

Each of these situations has different clinical problems, which should be considered.

In case of short time, it is advisable to use drugs with a short context sensitive half-time (CSHT), which allows a fast recovery.

In case of average time, a careful control of the analgesics and sedation levels reached is recommended, so to avoid over and under sedation events.

In case of long term, besides the controls, it is advisable to consider accumulation events due to hepatic and renal clearance impairment and to program a gradual reduction of drugs, so to avoid or at least to reduce the appearance of a withdrawal syndrome.

Recommendations

The use of a single venous route exclusively for analgo-sedation drugs is recommended so as to reduce the risk of hidden bolus. It is essential that the planned regimen not be suspended suddenly during the transportation of the patient for diagnostic examinations or for transfers. It is recommended that the choice of the drugs, considering the presumable action length (CSHT) be adapted to the planned length of the analgo-sedation regimen (grade E).

ANALGESICS

Opioids.—An opium-phobic attitude exists even in ICUs as a result of cultural prejudices, emotional sterilization of other people's pain, underestimation of pain reception consequences and emphasis of the risks as side effects, problems of tolerance and abstinence.

The use of opioids to oppose agitation is effective only if it is due to pain. Other causes such as hypoxia, hypercapnia, electrolytic disequilibrium, sepsis, thyrotoxic crisis, steroid psychosis, residual curarization, paradoxical reaction to benzodiazepines should be recognized and adequately treated. The administration of opioids in the ICU should be proportional to pain reception level and pain perceived by the patient. The pain reception level is variable during the 24 h and considers procedural pain and incident pain.

It is recommended to formulate a therapeutic plan for opioid administration which considers a "basic infusional regimen", adapted to hemodynamics and extraction organ variations and to the patient's general features (age, sex, muscular mass etc.), and a "rescue dose regimen" through bolus or increases in the infusion speed to avoid incident and procedural pain. It is also recommended that during infusion there should be a control of:

- analgesic level;
- respiratory rate;
- respiratory drive parameters;
- rhythm and entity of canalization.

It is recommended that in traumatic patients and in those who underwent a surgical operation treated with infusions and/or bolus and/or patient controlled analgesic techniques via epidural, all these techniques should continue, respecting the recommendations done by the SIAARTI study group.²⁶

The opioids frequently used in ICU are divided into:

- mild: tramadol;
- strong: morphine, fentanyl and remifentanil.

TRAMADOL.—It has a double action mechanism; besides being an agonist of μ receptors it inhibits the serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake; its metabolism is hepatic via glucuronidation and production of an active metabolite; as regards the other opioids respiratory depression and constipation are much less relevant; instead nausea and vomiting are more frequent; it causes seizures in predisposed patients or during therapy with serotonin selective reuptake inhibitors. By continuous infusion the daily dose of 4-5 mg/kg should not be exceeded (maximum dose is 400 mg/die, reduced in the elderly and in patients with renal failure).

Its use is frequent in the immediate post-operative period. There are no randomized controlled trials about its use in ICUs except a trial of epidural use in comparison with morphine.²⁷

MORPHINE.—Still very much used in ICUs, even in pediatric ones, both in bolus form and continuous infusion. Its use is recommended in the American guidelines JCAHO. Among opioids it is the most hydrophilic molecule, with a low protein binding (30%) and a pKa of 7.9 so it is influenced by plasma pH variations; the action onset is 10-15 min after i.v. administration. The hepatic metabolism by glucuronidation produces 80% of M3 glucuronate, without analgesic action and neurotoxic, and 20% of M6 glucuronate, a 15-20 more active metabolite than morphine. Both these metabolites are eliminated by the kidneys, therefore there is an accumulation in the patient with renal failure. Very important is the histamine release of the morphine, furthermore there is the risk of late respiratory depression. Not very expensive, effective, ideal in the obese patient, its clinical use requires necessarily the continuous titrometry of the effective dose.

PHENYLPIPERIDINE DERIVATIVES.—Fentanyl, alfentanil, remifentanil and sufentanil present some spatial configuration features similar to morphine, but the insertion of opportune structural variations allowed the affinity modulation and intrinsic activities for the various morphine receptors and the pharmacokinetics features modification.

If, from the pharmacodynamics point of view, there is a good level of homogeneity with a more quantitative difference (power), instead the pharmacokinetics features present important differences which can become relevant when they are administered by continuous infusion, specially for a long time or in specific clinical situations.

Synthetic opioids are mild base with different pKa, a protein binding generally with alfa-acid glycoprotein AAG, different fat solubility, presence of active metabolites, different CSHT.

The pKa of a drug represents the pharmacological feature which produces its ionization grade in certain solutions and it is equivalent to the pH at which the drug is half ionized. The synthetic opioids have a pKa between 6.5 (alfentanil) and 8.4 (fentanyl). When the pKa is higher than the physiological blood pH, the basic drug is generally dissociated. The acid pH, increasing the ionization part, decreases the power, while the alkaline pH increasing the non ionization part, increases the power. This principle is valid for all opioids except for remifentanil and alfentanil whose pKa, 7.07 and 6.5 respectively, are lower than the physiological blood pH. Remifentanil and alfentanil don't feel the variations of plasmatic pH between 7.20 and 7.60.

Fat solubility (octanol/water coefficient) with a plasma pH of 7.40 is for all the fentanyl derivatives clearly higher than that of morphine and meperidine and determines the speed with which the blood-brain barrier crossing happens and, therefore, the concentration steady state between plasma and the central nervous system (CNS). The more the opioid is fat soluble, the higher is the distribution volume at steady state. When fat solubility is really elevated (fentanyl, sufentanil), the molecule also binds lipid sites differently from receptors ones, so inactive from a pharmacological point of view, like the membrane phospholipids. During the prolonged use of the drug, the accumulation also interests extranervous sites (stomach and lung). This is the reason for redistribution events with secondary concentration peaks in the CNS (fentanyl, sufentanil).

THE CONTEXT SENSITIVE HALFTIME.—A relatively new pharmacokinetics parameter is the CSHT, in other words the time necessary to the drug plasmatic concentration to become half, at the end of an infusion so as to maintain the plasmatic concentration constant. Since, on some occasions, a decrease of 50%, even if relevant, could not coincide with the disappearance of the drug effects, it is interesting to know the more generic time of the context sensitive decrease, where the context is the time of infusion.²⁸ The CSHT can be really different from the elimination half-life and is generally a more useful indicator of drug behavior in the clinical sphere. Respecting the pharmacokinetics parameters described the most reliable opioids for an average time use seem to be sufentanil and remifentanil.

OPIOID SIDE EFFECTS.—Among the opioid side effects should be remembered:

- hypotension and bradycardia;
- nausea-vomiting;
- reduced intestinal transit;
- tolerance-withdrawal;
- respiratory depression;
- muscle rigidity;
- immunity depression;
- ileus.

Hypotension: is more present when bolus are given, while by continuous infusion this effect is reduced.

Bradycardia: is constantly present during continuous infusion, but it does not prevent its use in the range of usual therapeutic doses.

Tolerance-withdrawal: a specific paragraph has been dedicated to these problems.

Respiratory depression: all the opioids cause respiratory depression. However, using a continuous infusion with low dosages of remifentanil $0.05 \mu\text{g} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1} \cdot \text{min}^{-1}$,²⁹ sufentanil 0.2 to $0.3 \mu\text{g} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$,³⁰ it is possible to obtain a Ramsay score of 2 and 3 also maintaining a respiratory drive of the patient so to allow the use of pressure support ventilation techniques.

Muscle rigidity: all opioids cause muscle rigidity, dose and administration form depen-

dent. There is a higher incidence of muscle rigidity by bolus, even if hidden.

Immunity depression: the immunomodulation induced by the opioids is mediated by receptors that are located on the immune cells and in the CNS. Even a negative feedback mechanism, through hypothalamus-hypophysis-suprarenal gland axis, which could increase the immunodepressive response, has been supposed. However, according to what has been reported by recent reviews, this immunodepressive effect does not appear clinically relevant.³¹

NONOPIOID ANALGESICS.—FANS or paracetamol can be used in addition to the opioids in selected patients, producing a so called "sparring" effect on the opioids. The therapy with ketorolac should be limited to a maximum of 5 days, with careful control for the development of renal failure or intestinal bleeding. Other FANS can be used by the enteric way in selected patients. At the moment no data are available about the use of selective COX-2 inhibitors in ICU.

DRUGS FOR SEDATION

The most frequently used drugs for sedation are benzodiazepines and propofol.

Benzodiazepines.—The benzodiazepines are the most commonly used drugs to sedate artificially ventilated patients. They increase the inhibition of the CNS mediated by the GABA receptor complex, which regulates a chlorine channel on the cell membrane. Increasing the chlorine flow into the cell, the nerve cells hyperpolarize and the excitability threshold increases.³²

All the benzodiazepines cause a dose dependent depression of the consciousness. They are potent amnesia inducers and anxiolytics. Lorazepam induces a longer (anterograde) amnesia. With an elevated dose they can induce hypnosis. In the elderly patient a paradoxical state of agitation which gets worse increasing the dose can be observed. All the benzodiazepines have antiepileptic properties.

The benzodiazepines cause a centrally mediated dose dependent respiratory depre-

sion. Such respiratory depression, unlike the one induced by opioids, is of lower entity and is distinguished by reduction of the tidal volume and increase in respiratory rate. Even low doses of benzodiazepines can influence the respiratory response to hypoxia.

In patients with normal volemia benzodiazepines have very small hemodynamic effects (low BP reduction without concomitant increase in HR). However, in critically ill patients, hypovolemic and with increased intrinsic sympathetic activity, such effects can be more marked.

All the benzodiazepines are fat soluble compounds and, therefore, they are extensively distributed in the fat tissue (high distribution volume). The activity length after each bolus depends on the redistribution speed to the peripheral tissues.

DIAZEPAM.—This is a benzodiazepine with rapid onset (1-3 min) and low activity length after single administration (30-60 min) because of the elevated fat solubility. It is rarely administered by continuous infusion, because of the long elimination half-life. Once the peripheral compartment is saturated, the metabolic and clinical recovery can require several days. It is not a drug indicated for continuous sedation, its use is limited to neurologic emergencies (*status epilepticus*). Diazepam has many active metabolites which prolong its half-life. The metabolism depends on the hepatic function and is prolonged in the elderly or in case of hepatic failure.

LORAZEPAM.—This is a benzodiazepine with intermediate activity length, it can be administered by infusion or by intermittent bolus. It has an activity onset slower than midazolam (5 min) because of its lower fat solubility, which increases the time necessary to cross the blood-brain barrier. Because of the long half-life after a single administration (10-20 h); lorazepam is the benzodiazepine of first choice for prolonged sedation. Excretion halftime modifications have not been observed in patients with renal failure, while it is opportune to reduce the dose in patients with hepatic impairment.

Most of the pharmacokinetics studies have been done on healthy volunteers, so that

they cannot be applied to critically ill patients. Recent studies have shown an extension of sedation in patients who underwent a long-term infusion of lorazepam in comparison to midazolam.

The use of lorazepam at high doses has been associated with lactacidosis from propylene glycol toxicity.³³

MIDAZOLAM.—This is a benzodiazepine with rapid onset (0.5–5 min) and small activity length after single administration (2 h). It is a hydrophilic drug which becomes fat soluble in blood. It is metabolized by the liver and excreted by the kidney. The alpha-hydroxymidazolam metabolite has got a weak sedative activity and a half-life of about 1 h in the patient with normal renal activity.

When administered by continuous infusion to critically ill patients, the pharmacokinetics parameters undergo various modifications. After 1 h of infusion, midazolam accumulates in the peripheral tissues, which release it in the plasma at the interruption of the infusion. The extension of the clinical effects can last hours or days. This problem can be reduced by the daily interruption of the sedation followed by the reduction of the infusion speed. Furthermore, in critically ill patients with hepatic and renal impairment, in obese patients and in the elderly an extension of the sedation times can be observed after the accumulation of midazolam and its metabolite.

PROPOFOL.—This is a phenol derivative with sedative and hypnotic properties, formulated as a lipid emulsion for exclusive intravenous use. It is highly fat-soluble and it crosses the blood-brain barrier quickly, with consequent rapid onset and rapid peripheral redistribution.

Various clinical studies have confirmed propofol efficacy for patient sedation in the ICU.³⁴

Thanks to its rapid redistribution and clearance, propofol allows a recovery rapidity higher than midazolam, even for prolonged sedation of more than 72 h. The plasmatic concentrations of propofol enough to obtain a Ramsey score of 2–5 vary from 0.25 to 2 µg/mL.

It is recommended to not exceed the dose of 5 mg/kg/h for more than 5 days in the

continuous infusion regimen of propofol.³⁵ Triglyceride concentration should be controlled after 2 days of continuous infusion of propofol and the total caloric supply in the form of lipids should be considered in the calculation of the nutritional supply.

TOLERANCE AND WITHDRAWAL TREATMENT

Clinical studies have shown that patients who underwent, for more than 1 week, a therapy with opioids or sedatives develop a neuro-adaptation or a physical addiction, therefore the rapid suspension of these drugs can lead to withdrawal symptoms. Patients who have received more than 35 mg/daily of lorazepam and 5 mg/daily of fentanyl have a high risk of withdrawal development. The tolerance develops more quickly if the administration is by continuous infusion rather than by bolus. In the adult abstinence is associated to the length of stay and artificial ventilation extension and to the sedative and analgesic dosages.

For weaning from opioids it is recommended to decrease continuous infusion daily by 20–40% at the beginning and to proceed with variations of the infusion plan of 10% every 12–24 h according to the patient's response.³

Tolerance and addiction in the intensive care unit.—The potential risk of developing a withdrawal syndrome after administration of drugs like opioids, benzodiazepines or propofol, should be kept in mind when elevated dosages or continuous infusion for more than 7 days have been used.³ After a long-term analgo-sedation, withdrawal syndrome incidence in the ICU reaches from 20% to 80% of cases.³⁶ The withdrawal syndrome changes from patient to patient, according to different features, which include drugs used, age, cognitive state and medical condition of the treated subject. Sometimes, it could be different to evaluate if the patient's confusion and agitation in the ICU are signs of a benzodiazepine and opioid withdrawal syndrome rather than correlated to the discomfort relative to the environment. According to the scale suggested by Himmelsbach,³⁷ Cammarano *et al.*³⁸ in 1998 created a set of signs and symptoms of opioid and benzodi-

TABLE III.—Intensity calculation of the withdrawal syndrome after sedation suspension in ICU.³⁹

Parameters	0	1	2	3
Temp.	<36	36-37	37-38	>38
HR	<90	<100	100-120	>120
MAP	<90	<100	>100	>120
Perspiration	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Mydriasis	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Diarrhoea	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Nausea/Vomiting	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Restlessness	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Yawnings	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe

Temp.: temperature (C°). HR: heart rate (pulses/min). MAP: mean arterial pressure (mmHg).

azepine withdrawal to identify patients with an acute withdrawal syndrome.

a) Signs and symptoms of opioid withdrawal:

Signs:

- spasmodic desire for the drug;
- anxiety;
- increased pain threshold;
- cramps;
- yawning;
- nausea;
- insomnia;
- delirium;
- irritability;
- alteration of humor.

Symptoms:

- mydriasis;
- vomiting;
- fever;
- tachypnoea;
- perspiration;
- tachycardia;
- hypertension;
- diarrhoea.

Withdrawal is diagnosed if there are more than 2 symptoms and more than 2 signs.

b) Signs and symptoms of BDZ withdrawal:

- insomnia;
- anxiety;
- alteration of humor;
- tremor;
- headache;

- nausea;
- perspiration;
- asthenia;
- agitation;
- increased sensitivity to light and noises;
- paresthesia;
- cramps;
- clonus;
- sleep disorder, delirium;
- seizures.

Korak-Leiter *et al.*³⁹ have created a scoring system (Table III) for the evaluation of the intensity of the withdrawal symptoms in patients who have received long-term sedation with opioids or hypnotics.

Combined treatment with opioids and benzodiazepines can increase the risk of tolerance to opioids. The combination of sufentanil with a benzodiazepine (midazolam) causes a rapid increase (within 72 h) in opioid demand, as well as an extension of the length of the withdrawal symptoms at the interruption of the treatment.³⁹ The cause of such an increase could be the relative inactivation of the serotonin and noradrenalin, benzodiazepine mediated inhibition systems, as well as the down-regulation of the opioid receptors in CNS mediated again by the benzodiazepines. Short activity drugs should be considered agents of first choice, when the aim of the analgo-sedation is the opportunity of a rapid recovery for a daily neurologic evaluation. However, such drugs can cause acute tolerance events, in other words the need to increase progressively the dose needed to reach the analgesic and sedative planned level. Furthermore, the withdrawal symptoms seem to be more severe after the interruption of short half-life drugs rather than after those with long activity length. In the same way as midazolam, withdrawal symptoms have been shown in ICU patients after the use of short activity opioids after their interruption. Three cases of severe and rapid withdrawal, with signs of acute tolerance, have been described after analgo-sedation with remifentanil.⁴⁰ The authors register an incidence of this syndrome in about 10% of patients treated with this drug. The symptoms develop about 10 min after the inter-

ruption of a remifentanil infusion of ≤ 2 h. The current American guidelines recommend avoiding the opioid withdrawal syndrome by progressively reducing the infusion speed.³

The weaning from opioids should consider daily reduction not higher than 5-10% to avoid withdrawal symptoms, when the treatment provided elevated dosages. It is recommended to interrupt a continuous infusion of remifentanil over a period not shorter than 24-48 h, in addition to a contemporary morphine infusion.⁴⁰

Withdrawal syndrome treatment.—The first rule for avoiding the withdrawal syndrome is to not interrupt administration suddenly drug, but to reduce the dose progressively.³ Once diagnosed, the sedative and opioid withdrawal syndrome is treated with alfa-2-agonists, like clonidine and dexmedetomidine (not yet available in Italy) and/or with methadone.⁴¹

Narcotics withdrawal is characterized by a hypernoradrenergic state. Opioids and alfa-2-agonists act against each other on the central sympathetic tone. Reducing the sympathetic discharge and noradrenergic activity, and increasing the parasympathetic tone, the alfa-2-agonists reduce metabolism, HR, myocardial contraction and oxygen demand and vascular resistance. Clonidine has been used to attenuate narcotics withdrawal symptoms for more than 20 years. Clonidine infusion can be used up to a dosage of 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{h}$ and modified according to needs and to hemodynamic parameters (HR and mean arterial pressure, MAP). Dexmedetomidine is an alfa-2-adrenergic agonist with an affinity for alfa-2 receptor 8 times higher than clonidine, so resulting more selective for alfa-2-A and less for alfa-1. Dexmedetomidine has been used for benzodiazepine and opioid withdrawal syndromes both in adults⁴² and in children.⁴³ The advantage of dexmedetomidine is that it produces sedation, analgesia and weak sympathetic activity, without significant consumption and allows a conscious sedation suggesting a future for sedation in the ICU as well.⁴⁴

Even though not representing an obstacle for the use of analgesics and sedatives in patients in the ICU, tolerance, physical addic-

tion and withdrawal syndromes should be well known by the intensive care physician and should be considered after analgo-sedation interruption. It is necessary to distinguish between diagnosis and treatment of the withdrawal syndrome and delirium (acute mental confusion state) which has a prevalence of 60-80% in patients admitted to the ICU and can be diagnosed through the CAM-ICU system suggested by Ely *et al.*⁴⁵

Haloperidol (1-2 mg *i.v.* every 4-6 h till 25 mg/h by continuous infusion) is the agent of first choice for the treatment of delirium in patients in the ICU. Olanzapine, an antipsychotic drug of the second generation, can represent a valid alternative to haloperidol in patients with delirium in the ICU; above all when the last one is contraindicated, especially in patients with Parkinson syndrome, long QT syndrome or during treatment with drugs which influence repolarization.⁴⁶ During treatment with haloperidol patients must be monitored for possible ECG modifications (extension of the QT interval and arrhythmia). Nicotine, alcohol and psychoactive substances withdrawal can represent one of those ignored causes of delirium in patients in the ICU. Haloperidol was studied in the treatment of alcohol withdrawal syndrome (AWS), which can be seen in adult ICU patients and it was effective in reducing the severity of the symptoms.⁴⁷

Recommendations

*The potential risk of developing a withdrawal syndrome after administration of drugs like opioids, benzodiazepines or propofol, should be considered when elevated doses or continuous infusion for more than 7 days have been used. The first rule for avoiding a withdrawal syndrome is to not interrupt the administration of drugs suddenly, but to reduce doses progressively. It is necessary to distinguish between diagnosis and treatment of a withdrawal syndrome and delirium development. Haloperidol (1-2 mg *i.v.* every 4-6 h till 25 mg/h by continuous infusion) is the agent of first choice for the treatment of delirium in patients in ICU (grade D).*

Sleep

Sleep anomalies are common events and fully studied in ICU patients and they represent an important stress factor which negatively influences outcome and morbidity.⁴⁸ The reason for these qualitative and quantitative alterations are multifactorial, connected to the underlying pathologies, the drugs and to the characteristics of the intensive-therapeutic environment. However, they are not exclusively due to excessive noisiness and brightness, or to the numerous nurse-patient interactions necessary for the ICUs.⁴⁹ More recently other possible causes such as circadian rhythm abolition of melatonin secretion have been considered.⁵⁰

It is necessary to facilitate circadian rhythm, first of all with no pharmacological interventions, improving environmental comfort, decreasing the intensity of brightness, minimizing the interactions and the invasive manoeuvres during the night and programming stressful events, like weaning phases, during the day. It is advisable, where necessary, to favor sleep during the night, modifying the sedative infusion speed or programming extrabolus.

Pediatric aspects

Pain evaluation is peculiar during pediatric age, for the difficulties connected to the verbalization and to the progressive development of the cognitive capacity.

Why is it difficult to evaluate pain in a child?

- 1) Subjective evaluation makes evaluation difficult whatever the age.
- 2) Difficulty of language.
- 3) Absence of personal references which confer comparison elements (pain memory).
- 4) Careful evaluation needs: a conscious and collaborative patient.

5) The one who evaluates must pay attention to the symptomatology and should be objective during the interpretation.

What should be considered?

- 1) Grade of development.

2) Parents attitude.

- 3) Hospital admission effect.
- 4) Symbolic meaning of pain.
- 5) Physiological consequences of pain.
- 6) Efficacy of the drugs used.

How is pediatric pain measured?

Evaluation scales and the pain and sedation measured in the child have been validated for the treatment of acute postoperative pain or for invasive procedures. Their use in the ICU is not yet codified.

For the measurement of pain in pediatrics the scales are divided into:

- physiological;
- behavioral;
- observational;
- of self-evaluation.

In association with the evaluation scales of pain it seems to be essential, considering the side effects which the analgesic substances used can provoke, to evaluate the sedation level with the employment of appropriate scales. The evaluation and the treatment of pain in children imply an answer to at least to 4 questions:

- Has this child got pain?
- What is the intensity of pain?
- What is the basic mechanism?
- What instruments have we got to contrast it?

EVALUATION METHODS

Visual analogue scale.—It is the self-evaluation method most used at the moment. The intensity of pain is represented by an upright line, usually of 10 cm, at whose extremities 2 sentences are written: on the left side "no pain", on the right side "much much pain". It could be used in children over 5 years.

Face representations.—For children from 2 to 4 years old, the Anglo-Saxons have suggested using a series of faces which represent different grades of happiness and sadness. Different versions, some more schematic, others more complex have been suggested. In comparison to the VAS it allows us to pick

TABLE IV.—*Comfort scale*.⁵¹

Points	1	2	3	4	5
Sleep	Deep	Light	Normal	Awake	
Calm	Calm	Slight anxiety	Anxiety	Normal anxiety	Panic
Agitation					
Respiration	Absent	Poor answer to the ventilation	Cough, opposition to mechanical ventilation	Continuous cough	Opposition Contrast to mechanical ventilation
Mobility	Absent	Occasional	Frequent	Good	Total
MAP	Lower than basic values	Equal to basic values	Sometimes >15% of basic values	Often >15% of basic values	Always >15% of basic values
HR	Lower than basic values	Equal to basic values	Sometimes >15% of basic values	Often >15% of basic values	Always >15% of basic values
Muscle tone	Generalized hypotonia	Slight hypotonia	Normal tone	Tone hands, feet flexibility	General hypertonia
Facial mimic	Relaxed muscles	No tension	Tension of some muscles	Obvious tension of all muscles	Contraction of all muscles, grimaces

up a more emotional component. Among the objective/behavioral scales, which could be used for all ages and even for non-collaborative patients, we want to recall the Comfort scale⁵¹ used in the ICU too (Table IV). Each patient who receives analgesia and sedation must have his score made in the notes with the pain score and the doses of the administered drugs (each score >8 is indicative of poor sedation).

Even for the child it is advisable to make an analgo-sedation plan, which includes additional doses in case of incident or procedural pain (central veins, tracheotomy, drains, suction, mobilization). Among the different drugs to use in association for analgo-sedation in pediatric age, the following doses are suggested in the literature:

- fentanyl 2-3 µg/kg/h;
- morphine 10-30 µg/kg/h;
- sufentanil 0.2-0.3 µg/kg/h;
- remifentanil 0.05-0.25 µg/kg/h;
- propofol 1-3 mg/kg/h (to use exclusively in patients over 10 years old);
- midazolam 0.05-0.15 mg/kg/h;
- ketamine 0.2-2 mg/kg/h;
- thiopental 1-3 mg/kg/h (to use not as a sedative but exclusively for status epilepticus therapy or for malignant intracranial hypertension).

For analgo-sedation in the ICU in pediatric age a diagnostic and therapeutic plan should be made, considering the choice of evaluation method, the analgesic drugs and the sedatives to use and the possible employment of no pharmacological techniques (Grade D).

NEUROTRAMA

The aims of sedating the patient with head trauma are:

- facilitate mechanical ventilation (modulation of PaCO₂);
- intracranial hypertension therapy (reduction of CMRO₂);
- seizure treatment;
- neurovegetative alterations therapy;
- avoid uncontrolled increases of BP;
- possible neuroprotection.

Pain control, whose clinical evaluation is very difficult in any case because of the deteriorated consciousness level of the patient, is often neglected in neurotrauma with evident worsening of the patient, because the same pain causes intracranial hypertension and increase of systolic BP. It has been shown by some authors⁵² that an analgesia based

sedation regimen allowed an easier evaluation of the consciousness state, with the same control of the intracranial hypertension than a traditional sedation regimen based only on hypnotics.

As sedation, analgesia can control the conditions of agitation, hypertensive peaks, the contrast with the mechanical ventilator; the main restrictions are the possible hemodynamic alterations and the difficult control of the analgo-sedation protocol. Evidence-based medicine guidelines are not available.

TRAUMA

Pain is usually considered of secondary importance in trauma patients, while pain treatment should be a main priority in the management of polytrauma. Pain treatment does not only improve the patient's comfort, but it significantly reduces morbidity and improves the long-term outcome.⁵³ It is obvious that a strong and effective pain treatment, above all in closed and open thoracic trauma, can reduce the ventilation period and consequently reduce the time and cost of a stay in the ICU. Pain secondary to a severe trauma presents 3 distinct phases: emergency phase, recovery phase and rehabilitation phase. The temporal characteristics of pain should be considered in each phase and the treatment should be directed both against the continuous pain and the incident pain due to movements and painful medical procedures.

In these patients a combination of nociceptive and neuropathic pain can be seen and even more, in their pain reception, an important role is played by psychological and environmental features. Acute phase pain is due to the massive, prolonged stimulation which originates from the damaged tissues. The inflammatory response started by the lesion contributes to the development of primary hyperalgesia and to the incoming stimuli, which cause secondary hyperalgesia. The direct trauma of the nervous structures, always involved in this kind of trauma, can start the development of neuropathic pain. Rarely it develops immediately after a lesion, but often it shows days or weeks later and

can change into persistent chronic pain. The presence of neuropathic pain should be searched with careful examination of the patient and adequately treated. The recovery phase changes according to the kind of lesion and can last for weeks. During this time a basic analgesia with higher levels for the painful manoeuvres and movements must be guaranteed.

In the trauma patients during the acute phase, the administration with i.v. titrimetry of opioids allows us to obtain an adequate analgesia for the different demands of each patient. In patients who are hemodynamically unstable, the administration of drugs by intramuscular or subcutaneous injection could not be effective because the absorption could be late and inadequate in case of hypovolemia. Once a good level of reduction of pain has been reached analgesia can be continued through i.v. continuous infusion with patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) in the patients able to understand how it works. PCA is universally considered an effective technique for acute pain treatment both in trauma and in burns, and it is effective both for adults and for patients of school age.⁵⁴

The recovery phase can continue for weeks according to lesion severity. Pain during this period is generally continuous with peaks correlated to surgical procedures, nursing and precocious rehabilitation. Pain control during this phase is particularly important to avoid the development of persistent chronic pain. The aim of analgesic therapy is to obtain a good basic analgesia with the opportunity to provide additional doses to control incident pain. For the conscious patient, PCA by continuous basic infusion represents the most qualified technique. Numerous regional techniques, especially the administration of drugs by epidural, can interrupt pain reception and provide a sure and effective pain treatment in critically ill patients, reducing significantly the requirement of systemic analgesics. If abundantly used regional analgesia can provide an excellent control of pain and it can have a significant role for the outcome improvement of the patient with reduced control effects due to opioid administration. In the thoracic-abdominal and lower limb

TABLE V.—*Risk factors of development of spinal haematoma in relation to drug and suspension time.*

Drug	Risk	Suspension time
FANS	Alone they do not increase bleeding risk	
Clopidogrel	Increased risk	7 days 10-14 days
Ticlopidine	Increased risk	8-48 h
Platelet receptors GP IIb/IIIa inhibitors	Really increased risk	According to the technique cards, surgical operation is discouraged at least for 4 weeks from the suspension of the therapy
Oral anticoagulants	Really increased risk	3-4 and control of PT-INR<1.5
Sodium heparin	Really increased risk	>1 h Evaluate in case of aPTT of 1.5-2 times higher than basic values
Calcium heparin	Low risk	
Low-molecular-weight heparins	Low risk in single dose (thrombosis prophylaxis) High risk in therapeutic dose	10-12 h from the last administration More than 24 h 10 days
Fibrinolitics or thrombolytics	Really increased risk	
Thrombin inhibitors	Not yet valuable risk because of lack of data in literature	
Fondaparinux	Increased risk	18-24 h

trauma, in alert patients, when there are no contraindications for the application of an epidural catheter, a continuous epidural analgesia is indicated. Even in these patients the indications and the contraindications to the application of an epidural catheter refer generally to the presence of a deteriorated hemocoagulation and to a possible thrombosis prophylaxis with anticoagulants and to immunodeficiency conditions. In trauma or complex lesions localized in only one limb it is also possible to use peripheral continuous blocks which can be used, as an alternative to central blocks, even in patients who underwent drug treatments which interfere with the clotting. The efficacy of these techniques is largely shown even in patients who underwent a reconstruction operation for complex lesions of the limbs. For the criteria to follow see SIAARTI guidelines about regional anaesthesia.⁵⁵

Epidural analgesia and paravertebral block proved to be effective in reducing mechanical ventilation length in patients who underwent thoracic drains. The paravertebral thoracic block is absolutely suggested in patients

with multiple monolateral costal fractures, because it proved to be effective in improving the respiratory dynamics and in reducing the need for mechanical ventilation in thoracic closed trauma. In the case of patients admitted to the ICU after complex surgical operations it is suggested to continue epidural or perineural analgesia, if already used during the operation, by continuous infusion of local anaesthetic, with or without opioids and additional drugs, according to clinical condition. Epidural analgesia proved to be significant both as analgesic efficacy and for reducing respiratory and thromboembolism complications in patients who underwent an operation. For the choice of postoperative pain treatment see SIAARTI guidelines published on the subject.⁵⁶ Table V summarizes the risk factors of development of a spinal haematoma in relation to pharmacological therapies which interfere with the coagulation cascade and the possible suspension periods to respect before the application of an epidural catheter.⁵⁷ We want to remind you that even the removal of the catheter is considered an occasion with high risk of devel-

TABLE VI.—*Regional blocks and drugs most suitable for multitrauma.*

Pathology	Therapeutic directions	Drugs	Bibliographical References
Complex trauma of upper limb	Continuous para vertebral block of brachial plexus	Bupivacaine 0.125% Ropivacaine 0.2% Levobupivacaine 0.125% Volume: 5-7 mL/h Continuous infusion+bolus on demand Additives: Clonidine 1 µg/mL Sufentanil 0.5-1 µg/mL	Vatashsky <i>et al.</i> ⁵⁸ Mezzatesta <i>et al.</i> ⁵⁹
Complex trauma of lower limb	Continuous block of lumbar plexus Femoral nerve block Sciatic nerve block	Bupivacaine 0.125% Ropivacaine 0.2% Levobupivacaine 0.125% Volume: 5-15 mL/h Continuous infusion+bolus on demand Additives: Clonidine 1 µg/mL Sufentanil 0.5-1 µg/mL	Brands <i>et al.</i> ⁶⁰ Di Benedetto <i>et al.</i> ⁶¹
Thoracic trauma	Continuous epidural Para vertebral block	Bupivacaine 0.125% Ropivacaine 0.1-0.2% Levobupivacaine 0.125% Volume: 3-5 mL/h Continuous infusion+bolus on demand Additives: Clonidine 1 µg/mL Sufentanil 0.5-1 µg/mL Bupivacaine 0.125% Ropivacaine 0.2% Levobupivacaine 0.125% Volume: 5-10 mL/h Continuous infusion	Karmakar <i>et al.</i> ⁶² Karmakar <i>et al.</i> ⁶³

opment of epidural haematoma. We also want to remind you that the contemporary administration of substances which can interfere with platelet aggregation (aspirin, dextran) can increase the risk of epidural bleeding. In trauma patients who have shown a large blood loss the constant control of clotting times and of the platelet count is important. It is contraindicated to effect central blocks or deep peripheral blocks (vertebral blocks) in patients with an aPTT < 65% and with platelets < 65.000 cm³. In Table VI the regional blocks and the most suitable drugs for the multitrauma are suggested.⁵⁸⁻⁶³

Conclusions

Analgo-sedation techniques are not substitutive of human relations and of humanization procedures (liberalization of relative visits, music therapy, decrease of acoustic and vision pollution, environmental respect

for circadian rhythm, allowing the patients to participate in the procedures and in the therapeutic decisions, even when intubated), which must be codified in each ward.

Each day in the clinical round of each patient it is opportune to wonder:

Is pain present? How much pain is present? Is it adequately treated? Why sedate? Is the daily (every morning) suspension of the sedation advantageous? For how long should he still be sedated? With what analgo-sedation target?

For procedural pain (for the application of CVC or tracheotomy, nursing, mobilization, painful medications) it is always opportune to program an adequate analgo-sedation plan.

Moreover it is recommended to apply systematically to a series of principles of "good care", to validate in the next future by randomized controlled trials:

1st principle: rotation of the sedation methods every 3-5 days, when the planned seda-

57. Horlocker TT, Wedel DJ, Benzon H, Brown DL, Enneking KF, Heit JA *et al.* American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine. Regional anesthesia in the anticoagulated patient: defining the risks. *Reg Anesth Pain Med* 2004;29(2 Suppl):1-12.
58. Vatashsky E, Aronson HB. Continuous interscalene brachial plexus block for surgical operations on the hand. *Anesthesiology* 1980;53:356.
59. Mezzatesta JP, Scott DA, Schweitzer SA, Selander DE. Continuous axillary brachial plexus block for postoperative pain relief. Intermittent bolus versus continuous infusion. *Reg Anesth* 1997;22:357-62.
60. Brands E, Callanan VI. Continuous lumbar plexus block--analgesia for femoral neck fractures. *Anaesth Intensive Care* 1978;6:256-8.
61. Di Benedetto P, Casati A, Bertini L. Continuous subgluteous sciatic nerve block after orthopaedic foot and ankle surgery: comparison of two infusion techniques. *Reg Anesth Pain Med* 2002;27:168-72.
62. Karmakar MK, Anthony MH. Acute pain management of patients with multiple fractured ribs. *J Trauma* 2003;54:615-5.
63. Karmakar MK, Critchley LA, Ho AM, Gin T, Lee TW, Yim AP. Continuous thoracic paravertebral infusion of bupivacaine for pain management in patients with multiple fractured ribs. *Chest* 2003;123:424-31.



portamenti collegati al dolore (movimenti, espressione facciale e posturale) e fisiologiche (FC, FR, PA) e valutando come tali parametri si modifichino con la terapia antalgica.

Per fare questo è necessario implementare le conoscenze fisiopatologiche e farmacologiche e migliorare la formazione specifica del personale medico e, in particolare, di quello infermieristico sulle metodiche di misurazione del dolore e della sedazione in UTI.

Raccomandazioni

È indispensabile che ogni singola unità operativa adotti almeno una scala di valutazione del dolore per il paziente in grado di comunicare e una per il paziente che non può comunicare; è indispensabile che la misura del dolore sia riportata nel diario clinico a orari prestabiliti, al pari degli altri parametri vitali, e in occasione delle procedure invasive (grado D).

Valutazione della sedazione

Al pari del monitoraggio del dolore, il monitoraggio del livello di sedazione dovrebbe costituire parte integrante dell'intero trattamento terapeutico del paziente ricoverato in TI e i parametri di riferimento nella valutazione dell'analgo-sedazione dovrebbero essere registrati con la medesima cura riservata ai parametri cardiorespiratori.

Non esiste un livello di sedazione standard che sia ottimale per tutti i pazienti.

Gli esperti internazionali concordano nel sostenere che il livello di sedazione adeguato è differente per ogni paziente, in considerazione delle peculiari caratteristiche cliniche.

Va, quindi, enfatizzato il concetto dell'analgo-sedazione applicata su base individualizzata, sotto la diretta visione e secondo i criteri clinici dell'équipe di TI. La qualità di sedazione si definisce adeguata in base alla percentuale di ore in cui un paziente mantiene un desiderato livello di sedazione secondo il metodo di monitorizzazione impiegato¹⁶.

$$\text{Qualità di sedazione} = \frac{\text{Ore di sedazione adeguata}}{\text{Totale ore di sedazione}} \times 100$$

Un ragionevole obiettivo prevede una qualità di sedazione >85%.

La difficoltà nel monitorare la sedazione, tuttavia, sta nel fatto che non esiste uno strumento ideale, tale da rappresentare un gold standard internazionale, validato scientificamente per lo scopo specifico.

I problemi metodologici di fondo sono 3:

TABELLA II. — *Effetti collaterali della sedazione insufficiente e della sedazione eccessiva.*

Insufficiente sedazione	Eccessiva sedazione
1. Aumento stress	1. Coma farmacologico
2. Agitazione	2. Prolungata V.M.
3. Ipertensione, taхicardia	3. Immobilità, TVP, CIP
4. Asincronia col ventilatore	4. Insulti cerebrali non riconosciuti
5. Estubazione accidentale	5. Sviluppo di tolleranza, astinenza
	6. Aumento dei costi

1) le metodiche sono state quasi sempre testate su pazienti ricoverati in unità di rianimazione postoperatoria, che raramente presentano gli stessi disordini multi-organico di quelli ricoverati in TI;

2) la letteratura medica disponibile al riguardo si basa spesso su opinioni di esperti, più che sui risultati di evidenze cliniche;

3) gli studi pubblicati sull'argomento non sono quasi mai randomizzati, o, comunque, sono scarsamente controllati.

La misurazione del livello di sedazione garantisce l'ottimizzazione della qualità della sedazione, evitando così gli eventi avversi legati sia alla sedazione eccessiva sia alla sedazione insufficiente (Tabella II).

I metodi per valutare la profondità della sedazione possono essere divisi in 2 gruppi: oggettivi e soggettivi, a seconda che la tecnica richieda rispettivamente, l'applicazione di un indice derivato da una variabile fisiologica quantificabile oppure di uno scoring system.

A) Metodi soggettivi: scoring system. Si basano sull'osservazione clinica e vengono registrati in base alla valutazione diretta da parte di un osservatore.

De Jonghe *et al.*¹⁷, in una review sistematica del 2000 che ha preso in considerazione 25 studi effettuati su pazienti sedati in TI, hanno osservato l'alta attendibilità e la soddisfacente correlazione con altre scale raggiunta con la Ramsay scale e la Comfort scale sebbene questi scoring system abbiano una scarsa sensibilità nel registrare le minime variazioni dello stato di sedazione nel tempo. De Jonghe *et al.* nel 2003¹⁸ hanno elaborato una nuova scala, altamente riproducibile e affidabile nei pazienti in TI sottoposti a ventilazione meccanica.

B) Metodi oggettivi: sistemi strumentali di misurazione della sedazione.

Concentrazione plasmatica dei farmaci.

Elettromiografia del muscolo frontale.

Contrattilità dello sfintere esofageo inferiore.

EEG processato continuo.

Monitoraggio della funzione cerebrale.
Analizzatore della funzione cerebrale.
Analisi "power spectral array".
Bispectral index (BIS).
Acoustic evoked potential (AEP) monitor.
Entropia.

Questi sistemi sono stati adeguatamente impiegati e validati per l'uso nella pratica clinica anestesiologica, ma non ancora in TI. È auspicabile che, in questo ambito, vengano realizzati trial completi e accurati, rivolti in particolare alle metodiche oggettive, in grado di fornire indicazioni più precise.

Quello che si ritiene fondamentale è, in ogni caso, l'uniformità nell'impiego dello scoring system: in altre parole, la scala di valutazione che viene scelta deve essere utilizzata da tutto il personale, medico e paramedico, che, per vari motivi, viene a contatto con il paziente.

Raccomandazioni

È indispensabile che ogni singola unità operativa adotti almeno una scala di valutazione della sedazione; è indispensabile che la misura del livello di sedazione sia riportata nel diario clinico a orari prestabiliti, al pari degli altri parametri vitali (grado D).

Farmaci

In uno studio epidemiologico pubblicato nel 2001¹⁹ sull'uso di sedativi e analgesici nelle UTI italiane nella prima settimana di ricovero, nel 1994, gli Autori rilevano che, su 128 TI (circa il 30% di TI adulti), 31 differenti farmaci erano complessivamente utilizzati in 1.751 pazienti; nel 64% dei giorni era utilizzato un solo farmaco; il più prescritto era il propofol seguito da fentanyl e diazepam, mentre la morfina era somministrata per il 14,8% dei giorni.

Lo stesso GdS GiViTI, nel 2002, ha pubblicato uno studio multicentrico sull'uso di analgesici nel postoperatorio di pazienti ricoverati in 128 UTI italiane per un periodo di un mese²⁰. Su 661 pazienti, il 49% non riceve alcun oppioide nelle prime 48 h postoperatorie, più del 35% non riceve alcun analgesico. L'oppioide più utilizzato è il fentanyl, seguito da morfina e buprenorfina. Fra i 336 pazienti che ricevevano un oppioide, il 42% riceveva una sola somministrazione in bolo al giorno; la probabilità di ricevere un oppioide era ancora più bassa per il paziente in coma.

Nessun farmaco singolarmente è in grado di avere tutti gli effetti desiderati per l'analgo-sedazione in UTI; il farmaco ideale dovrebbe avere:

- rapido onset;
- durata d'azione prevedibile;
- assenza di metaboliti attivi;

- rapido recupero alla sospensione;
- facilità di titolazione;
- metabolismo organo-indipendente;
- minima interazione farmacologica;
- elevato indice terapeutico;
- basso costo.

VARIAZIONI FARMACOCINETICHE NEL PAZIENTE CRITICO

Il paziente ricoverato in UTI è un paziente critico che può presentare problemi epatici, renali ed essere molto spesso anche anziano. Tutti questi fattori alterano la farmacocinetica dei farmaci correntemente utilizzati per l'analgo-sedazione, impedendo una corretta programmazione dei tempi di recupero del paziente alla sospensione dei farmaci e favorendo una continua variabilità della profondità dell'analgo-sedazione stessa. Basti pensare che l'insufficienza renale si accompagna a:

- riduzione del flusso e/o della filtrazione glomerulare;
- aumento del volume di distribuzione;
- aumento della frazione libera, non legata dei farmaci;
- accumulo farmaci e/o metaboliti a eliminazione renale;
- effetti prolungati.

La disfunzione epatica è responsabile di variazioni della clearance dei farmaci per:

- riduzione del flusso ematico al fegato;
- ridotta attività degli enzimi epatici;
- variazione nella concentrazione delle proteine plasmatiche.

Nel paziente critico si può assistere ad alterata sintesi proteica ed enzimatica, aumento della quota libera non legata alle proteine del farmaco, aumento del volume di distribuzione, riduzione del flusso epatico per insufficienza circolatoria globale, ischemia splancnica, aumento della pressione intra-addominale.

Il paziente anziano. — L'età avanzata influenza sia la farmacocinetica sia la farmacodinamica. Nell'anziano si verificano una riduzione della massa magra muscolare e un aumento del tessuto adiposo. Il volume di distribuzione dei farmaci liposolubili come diazepam, midazolam, fentanyl e sufentanil aumenta, mentre diminuisce quello dei farmaci relativamente lipoinsolubili come paracetamolo, morfina e lorazepam.

Un maggiore volume di distribuzione prolunga l'emivita di eliminazione e aumenta la durata dell'effetto clinico del farmaco. La concentrazione dell'albunina diminuisce, mentre quella delle proteine della fase acuta, come l'alfa glicoproteina acida, aumenta.

Le funzioni epatica e renale diminuiscono con l'età; la riduzione del flusso epatico è causa di ridotta clearance per i farmaci a elevata velocità di estrazione.

Talvolta può risultare difficile valutare se la confusione e l'agitazione di un paziente in TI siano segni di una sindrome da astinenza da benzodiazepine e oppioidi, o piuttosto siano correlati al disagio relativo all'ambiente.

Sulla base della scala proposta da Himmelsbach³⁷, Cammarano *et al.*³⁸ nel 1998 hanno creato un set di segni e sintomi da astinenza da oppioidi e da benzodiazepine, per identificare i pazienti con una "acute withdrawal syndrome".

a) Segni e sintomi da astinenza da oppioidi:

Segni:

- desiderio spasmotico del farmaco;
- ansia;
- aumentata soglia al dolore;
- crampi muscolari;
- sbadigli;
- nausea;
- insonnia;
- delirio;
- irritabilità;
- disfuria.

Sintomi:

- midriasi;
- vomito;
- febbre;
- tachipneia;
- convulsioni;
- sudorazione;
- tachicardia;
- ipertensione;
- diarrea.

L'astinenza si diagnostica se sono presenti più di 2 sintomi e più di 2 segni.

b) Segni e sintomi di astinenza da benzodiazepina:

- insonnia;
- ansia;
- disfuria;
- tremori;
- cefalea;
- nausea;
- sudorazione;
- astenia;
- agitazione;
- aumentata sensibilità alla luce e ai rumori;
- parestesie;
- crampi;
- cloni;
- disturbi del sonno;
- delirio;
- convulsioni.

Korak-Leiter *et al.*³⁹ hanno realizzato uno scoring system (Tabella III) per la valutazione dell'intensità dei sintomi da astinenza nei pazienti che hanno ricevuto sedazioni a lungo termine con oppioidi o ipnotici.

TABELLA III. — *Calcolo dell'intensità della sindrome di astinenza dopo la sospensione della sedazione in TI.³⁹*

Parametri	0	1	2	3
Temp.	<36	36-37	37-38	>38
FC	<90	<100	100-120	>120
PAM	<90	<100	>100	>120
Sudorazione	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa
Midriasi	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa
Diarrea	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa
Nausea/vomito	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa
Irrequietezza	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa
Sbadigli	Assente	Lieve	Moderata	Severa

Temp.: temperatura (°C). FC: frequenza cardiaca (battiti/min); PAM: Pressione arteriosa media (mmHg).

Il trattamento combinato con oppioidi e benzodiazepine può incrementare il rischio di tolleranza agli oppioidi. La combinazione del sufentanil con una benzodiazepina (midazolam) determina un rapido incremento (entro 72 h) della richiesta di oppioidi, nonché un prolungamento della durata dei sintomi da astinenza all'interruzione del trattamento³⁹. La causa di tale incremento potrebbe essere la relativa inattivazione da parte delle benzodiazepine dei sistemi inibitori discendenti serotonergico e noradrennergico, nonché la down-regulation dei recettori per gli oppioidi nel SNC mediata ancora dalle benzodiazepine.

Farmaci a breve azione dovrebbero essere considerati gli agenti di prima scelta, quando l'obiettivo dell'analgo-sedazione è la possibilità di un rapido risveglio per una valutazione neurologica giornaliera. Tuttavia tali farmaci possono determinare fenomeni di tolleranza acuta, cioè della necessità di aumentare progressivamente le dosi atte a raggiungere il livello di analgesia e sedazione programmata. Inoltre, i sintomi da astinenza sembrano essere più severi dopo interruzione di farmaci a breve emivita rispetto a quelli con lunga durata d'azione. Così come per il midazolam, sono stati descritti, in pazienti di TI, sintomi da astinenza per l'utilizzo di oppioidi a breve azione dopo la loro interruzione. Tre casi di severa e rapida astinenza, con segni di tolleranza acuta, sono stati descritti dopo analgo-sedazione con remifentanil⁴⁰. Gli Autori riportano un'incidenza di tale sindrome in circa il 10% dei pazienti trattati con questo farmaco. I sintomi compaiono circa 10 min dopo l'interruzione di un'infusione di remifentanil di durata ≤2 h. Le attuali linee guida americane raccomandano di evitare la sindrome da astinenza da oppioidi riducendo progressivamente la velocità di infusione³. Lo svezzamento dagli oppioidi dovrebbe prevedere riduzioni giornaliere non superiori al 5-10% per evitare i sintomi da astinenza, quando il trattamento ha previsto elevati dosaggi. Si raccomanda di interrom-

pere un'infusione continua di remifentanil in un periodo non inferiore alle 24-48 h, in aggiunta a una contemporanea infusione di morfina⁴⁰.

Trattamento della sindrome da astinenza. — La prima regola per evitare la sindrome da astinenza è di non interrompere bruscamente la somministrazione dei farmaci, ma di ridurne progressivamente le dosi³.

Una volta diagnosticata, la sindrome da astinenza da sedativi e oppioidi va trattata con alfa-2-agonisti, come la clonidina e la dexmedetomidina (non ancora in commercio in Italia), e/o con il metadone⁴¹.

L'astinenza da narcotici è caratterizzata da uno stato ipernoradrenergico. Gli oppioidi e gli alfa-2-agonisti agiscono sinergisticamente sul tono simpatico centrale. Riducendo la scarica simpatica e l'attività noradrenergica e incrementando il tono parasimpatico, gli alfa-2-agonisti riducono il metabolismo, la FC, la contrattilità miocardica e la richiesta di ossigeno, e le resistenze vascolari. La clonidina è stata utilizzata per attenuare i sintomi da astinenza da narcotici per oltre 20 anni. L'infusione di clonidina può essere utilizzata fino a un dosaggio di 1 µg/kg/h e modificata in base alle necessità e ai parametri emodinamici (FC e pressione arteriosa media, PAM)³. La dexmedetomidina è un agonista alfa-2-adrenergico con un'affinità per i recettori alfa-2 8 volte maggiore a quella della clonidina, risultando così maggiormente selettiva per gli alfa-2-A e meno per gli alfa-1. La dexmedetomidina è stata utilizzata per le sindromi da astinenza da benzodiazepine e da oppioidi sia negli adulti⁴² sia nei bambini⁴³. Il vantaggio della dexmedetomidina è che fornisce sedazione, analgesia e debole attività simpatica, senza significativa depressione respiratoria. La dexmedetomidina riduce l'ansia, il consumo di oppioidi e permette la sedazione cosciente prefigurandone un impiego futuro anche per la sedazione stessa in TI⁴⁴.

Pur non rappresentando un ostacolo all'utilizzo di farmaci analgesici e sedativi nei pazienti in TI, tolleranza, dipendenza fisica e sindromi da astinenza dovrebbero essere familiari all'intensivista e doverebbero essere previste all'interruzione dell'analgo-sedazione.

Occorre differenziare la diagnosi e il trattamento della sindrome da astinenza dall'insorgenza del delirio, stato confusionale acuto che ha una prevalenza fino al 60-80% nei ricoverati in TI ed è diagnosticabile mediante il sistema CAM-ICU proposto da Ely *et al.*⁴⁵.

L'alooperidolo (1-2 mg e.v. ogni 4-6 h fino a 25 mg /h in infusione continua) è l'agente di prima scelta per il trattamento del delirio nei pazienti in TI. L'olanzapina, un antipsicotico di seconda generazione, può rappresentare una valida alternativa all'alooperidolo nei pazienti con delirio in TI, soprattutto quando quest'ultimo risulta controindicato, particolarmente nei pazienti con morbo di Parkinson, sindrome del QT lungo o in trattamento con farmaci che agiscono sulla ripolarizzazione⁴⁶. Durante il tratta-

mento con alooperidolo i pazienti devono essere monitorizzati per eventuali modificazioni elettrocardiografiche (allungamento dell'intervallo QT e aritmie).

L'astinenza da nicotina, da alcool e da sostanze psicoattive può rappresentare una delle cause misconosciute di delirio nei pazienti in TI. L'alooperidolo è stato studiato nel trattamento dell'alcohol withdrawal syndrome (AWS), che si può manifestare nei pazienti adulti in TI, e si è rivelato efficace nel ridurre la severità dei sintomi⁴⁷.

Raccomandazioni

Il potenziale rischio di sviluppare una sindrome da astinenza dopo somministrazione di farmaci quali oppioidi, benzodiazepine o propofol, dovrebbe essere preso in considerazione quando siano stati utilizzati elevati dosaggi o per infusioni continue di durata superiore ai 7 giorni. La prima regola per evitare la sindrome da astinenza è di non interrompere bruscamente la somministrazione dei farmaci, ma di ridurne progressivamente le dosi. Occorre differenziare la diagnosi e il trattamento della sindrome da astinenza dall'insorgenza del delirio. L'alooperidolo (1-2 mg e.v. ogni 4-6 h fino a 25 mg/h in infusione continua) è l'agente di prima scelta per il trattamento del delirio nei pazienti in TI (Grado D).

Sonno

Le anomalie del sonno sono fenomeni comuni e ampiamente studiati nei pazienti in TI e rappresentano un importante fattore di stress che incide negativamente sull'outcome e sulla morbilità⁴⁸.

Le ragioni di tali alterazioni, qualitative e quantitative, sono multifattoriali, legate alle patologie sottostanti, ai farmaci e alle peculiarità dell'ambiente intensivo-terapico. Tuttavia esse non sono riconducibili esclusivamente all'eccessiva rumorosità e luminosità, o alle numerose interazioni nurse-paziente necessarie per le cure intensive⁴⁹. Più recentemente sono state messe in evidenza altre possibili cause, quali l'abolizione del ritmo circadiano della secrezione di melatonina⁵⁰.

Occorre, quindi, facilitare il ripristino del ritmo sonno-veglia, in primis con interventi non farmacologici, migliorando il comfort ambientale, riducendo l'intensità della luce, minimizzando le interazioni e le manovre invasive nelle ore notturne e programmando eventi stressanti, quali le fasi di weaning, nelle ore diurne.

È opportuno, inoltre, ove necessario, favorire il sonno notturno modificando la velocità di infusione di sedativi o programmando boli extra.

Aspetti pediatrici

È peculiare in età pediatrica la valutazione del

dosaggio dei farmaci somministrati (ogni punteggio >8 è indicativo di scarsa sedazione).

Anche per il paziente pediatrico occorre pianificare un piano basale di analgo-sedazione, che preveda dosi aggiuntive in caso di dolore incidente o di previsione di dolore procedurale (vene centrali, tracheostomia, drenaggi, aspirazioni, mobilizzazione).

Tra i vari farmaci da usare in associazione per l'analgo-sedazione in età pediatrica, vengono consigliati in letteratura i seguenti dosaggi:

- fentanyl 2-3 µg/kg/h;
- morfina 10-30 µg/kg/h;
- sufentanil 0,2-0,3 µg/kg/h;
- remifentanil 0,05-0,25 µg/kg/h;
- propofol 1-3 mg/kg/h (da utilizzare esclusivamente nei pazienti di età superiore a 10 anni);
- midazolam 0,05-0,15 mg/kg/h;
- ketamina 0,2-2 mg/kg/h;
- tiopentone sodico 1-3 mg/kg/h (da utilizzare non come sedativo ma esclusivamente come terapia dello stato di male epilettico o dell'ipertensione endocranica maligna).

Raccomandazioni

Per l'analgo-sedazione in TI in età pediatrica si deve attuare un piano diagnostico terapeutico, che consideri la scelta del metodo di misurazione, i farmaci analgesici e sedativi da utilizzare e l'impiego eventuale di tecniche non farmacologiche (Grado D).

NEUROTRAUMA

Gli obiettivi della sedazione del paziente con trauma cranico sono:

- facilitare la ventilazione meccanica (modulazione della PaCO₂);
- terapia dell'ipertensione endocranica (riduzione del CMRO₂);
- trattare le convulsioni;
- terapia delle alterazioni neurovegetative;
- evitare rialzi incontrollati della pressione sistematica;
- eventuale "neuroprotezione".

Il controllo del dolore, la cui valutazione clinica è, comunque, molto difficile a causa dell'alterato livello di coscienza del paziente, è spesso trascurato nel neurotrauma con evidente nocume del paziente, in quanto il dolore stesso causa ipertensione endocranica e aumento della PA sistolica.

È stato dimostrato da alcuni Autori⁵² che un regime di sedazione "analgesia-based" consente una più agevole valutazione dello stato di coscienza, a parità di controllo della PIC rispetto al regime di sedazione tradizionale basato sui soli ipnotici.

Al pari della sedazione, l'analgesia può controllare gli stati di agitazione, le punzate ipertensive, il conflitto con il ventilatore meccanico: le limitazioni principali sono le possibili alterazioni dell'emodinamica e il difficoltoso monitoraggio dell'efficacia del protocollo di analgo-sedazione. Non sono disponibili linee guida ispirate alla medicina basata sull'evidenza.

TRAUMA

Il dolore di solito viene considerato di secondaria importanza nei pazienti traumatizzati, in realtà il trattamento del dolore dovrebbe costituire una priorità principale nell'algoritmo gestionale del politrauma. Il trattamento del dolore non migliora soltanto il comfort del paziente, ma riduce significativamente la morbilità e migliora l'outcome a lungo termine⁵³. Esistono alcune evidenze che un energico ed efficace trattamento antalgico, soprattutto nei traumi chiusi e aperti del torace, possa ridurre i tempi di ventilazione e, conseguentemente, ridurre i tempi e i costi di degenza nei centri di rianimazione. Il dolore secondario a un grave trauma presenta 3 fasi distinte: una fase dell'emergenza, la fase di guarigione e la fase di riabilitazione. Le caratteristiche temporali del dolore devono essere considerate in ciascuna fase: il trattamento deve essere diretto sia verso il dolore continuo sia verso il dolore incidente legato al movimento sia verso le procedure mediche dolorose.

In questi pazienti si nota una combinazione di dolore nociceutivo e neuropatico e, inoltre, nella loro percezione dolorosa, giocano un ruolo importante i fattori psicologici e ambientali. Il dolore della fase acuta è provocato dalla stimolazione massiva e prolungata che origina dai tessuti lesi. La risposta infiammatoria provocata dalla lesione contribuisce allo sviluppo dell'iperalgesia primaria e agli stimoli affettivi che causano l'iperalgesia secondaria. Il trauma diretto delle strutture nervose, sempre coinvolte in questo tipo di traumi, può dare origine allo sviluppo di un dolore neuropatico. Raramente si sviluppa immediatamente dopo la lesione, ma spesso si manifesta giorni o settimane più tardi e può trasformarsi in un dolore cronico persistente. La presenza del dolore neuropatico deve essere ricercata con un accurato esame del paziente e trattata opportunamente. La fase della guarigione varia a seconda del tipo di lesione e può durare anche settimane. In questo periodo si deve garantire un'analgesia di base con livelli maggiori per le manovre dolorose e per il movimento.

Nei pazienti traumatizzati in fase acuta, la somministrazione con titolazione endovenosa di farmaci oppioidi permette di ottenere un'analgesia adeguata alle diverse esigenze di ciascun paziente. Nei pazienti emodinamicamente instabili, la somministrazione di farmaci per via intramuscolare o sottocutanea potrebbe non essere efficace poiché l'assorbimento può

essere ritardato e inadeguato in presenza di ipovolemia. Una volta raggiunto un buon livello di risoluzione del dolore, l'analgesia può essere continuata mediante infusione continua endovenosa con analgesia controllata dal paziente, nei pazienti che sono in grado di comprenderne il funzionamento. L'analgesia controllata dal paziente già da anni è universalmente ritenuta una tecnica efficace di trattamento del dolore acuto sia da trauma sia da ustioni, ed è efficace sia per gli adulti sia per i piccoli pazienti dall'età scolare⁵⁴.

La fase della guarigione può continuare per settimane a seconda della gravità della lesione. Il dolore in questo periodo è, in genere, continuo con esacerbazioni legate alle manovre legate a procedure chirurgiche, al nursing e alla riabilitazione precoce. È particolarmente importante il controllo del dolore in questa fase per prevenire l'insorgenza di dolori cronici persistenti.

L'obiettivo della terapia analgesica è ottenere una buona analgesia di base con possibilità di fornire dosi aggiuntive per controllare il dolore incidente. Per i pazienti coscienti l'analgesia controllata dal paziente con infusione basale continua costituisce la tecnica più accreditata.

Numerose tecniche loco-regionali, in particolare la somministrazione di farmaci a livello epidurale, possono interrompere la nocicezione e fornire un trattamento del dolore sicuro ed efficace nei pazienti critici, riducendo in modo significativo il fabbisogno di analgesici sistemici. Se usata diffusamente, l'analgesia regionale può fornire un eccellente controllo del dolore e può avere un ruolo significativo nel miglioramento dell'outcome del paziente con ridotti effetti centrali legati alla somministrazione di oppioidi. Nei traumi toraco-addominali e degli arti inferiori, nei pazienti vigili, quando non sussistono le condizioni che controindichino il posizionamento di un catetere epidurale, è indicato l'uso dell'analgesia peridurale continua. Anche in questi pazienti le indicazioni e le controindicazioni al posizionamento di un catetere epidurale si riferiscono principalmente alla presenza di alterazioni dello stato emocoagulativo e all'eventuale tromboprotefissi con farmaci anticoagulanti o antiaggreganti e alle situazioni di immunodeficienza. Nei traumi o nelle lesioni complesse localizzate a un solo arto è anche possibile utilizzare i blocchi continui periferici che possono essere usati, come alternativa al blocco centrale, anche in pazienti sottoposti a trattamenti con farmaci che interferiscono con la coagulazione. L'efficacia di tali tecniche è ampiamente dimostrata anche nei pazienti sottoposti a interventi ricostruttivi per lesioni complesse degli arti. Per i criteri da seguire si rimanda alla linea guida SIAARTI sulla sicurezza in anestesia loco-regionale⁵⁵.

L'analgesia epidurale e, in alternativa, il blocco paravertebrale si sono dimostrati efficaci nel ridurre la durata della ventilazione meccanica in pazienti sottoposti a toracotomie. Il blocco paravertebrale toracico è assolutamente consigliato nei pazienti affetti da

fratture costali multiple monolaterali, in quanto si è dimostrato efficace nel migliorare la dinamica respiratoria e ridurre la necessità di ventilazione meccanica nei traumi chiusi del torace.

Nel caso di pazienti ricoverati in TI a seguito di interventi chirurgici maggiori o complicati, è consigliabile continuare a utilizzare l'analgesia epidurale o perineurale, se già utilizzata durante l'intervento, mediante infusione continua di anestetico locale, con o senza oppioidi e adiuvanti, a seconda delle condizioni cliniche. L'analgesia epidurale si è dimostrata significativa sia come efficacia analgesica sia nel ridurre le complicanze respiratorie e tromboemboliche nei pazienti sottoposti a chirurgia maggiore.

Per la scelta del trattamento antalgico postoperatorio si rimanda alla linea guida SIAARTI già pubblicate sull'argomento⁵⁶.

La Tabella V riassume i fattori di rischio di comparsa di ematoma spinale in relazione a terapie farmacologiche che interferiscono con la cascata coagulativa ed eventuali tempi di sospensione da rispettare prima del posizionamento di un catetere epidurale⁵⁷. Non bisogna dimenticare che anche la rimozione del catetere è considerata un momento a elevato rischio di comparsa di ematoma epidurale. Si ricorda, inoltre, che la contemporanea somministrazione di sostanze che possano interferire con l'aggregazione piastrinica (aspirina, destrani) può aumentare il rischio di sanguinamento epidurale.

Nei pazienti traumatizzati che hanno manifestato elevate perdite ematiche è importante il controllo costante dei tempi di coagulazione e della conta piastrinica. È controindicato effettuare blocchi centrali continui e blocchi periferici profondi (blocchi paravertebrali) nei pazienti con aPTT <65% e con piastrine <65.000/cm³.

Nella Tabella VI sono consigliati i blocchi locoregionali e i farmaci più idonei per il trattamento dei politraumatizzati⁵⁸⁻⁶³

Conclusioni

Le tecniche di analgo-sedazione non sono sostitutive delle relazioni umane e delle procedure di umanizzazione (liberalizzazione degli ingressi dei parenti, musicoterapia, contenimento dei livelli di inquinamento acustico e visivo, rispetto ambientale dei ritmi sonno veglia, far partecipare i pazienti coscienti alle procedure e alle decisioni terapeutiche, anche se intubati) che devono obbligatoriamente essere codificate nel singolo reparto.

Occorre chiedersi ogni giorno nel clinical round del singolo paziente:

È presente dolore? Quanto dolore è presente? È adeguatamente trattato?

Perché sedare? È vantaggiosa nel singolo paziente la sospensione giornaliera ogni mattina della seda-

TABELLA V. — *Fattori di rischio di sviluppo di ematoma spinale in relazione al farmaco e al tempo di sospensione.*

Drug	Risk	Suspension time
FANS	Da soli non aumentano il rischio di sanguinamento	
Clopidogrel	Rischio aumentato	7 giorni
Ticlopидina	Rischio aumentato	10-14 giorni
Antagonisti dei recettori piastrinici GP IIb/IIIa	Rischio molto aumentato	8-48 h Secondo le schede tecniche, l'atto chirurgico è consigliato per almeno 4 settimane dalla sospensione della terapia
Dicumarolici	Rischio molto aumentato	3-4 e controllo PT-INR<1,5
Eparina sodica	Rischio molto aumentato	>1 h Valutare in caso di aPTT of 1,5-2 volte il valore basale
Eparina calcica	Basso rischio	
Eparine basso peso molecolare	Basso rischio in monosomministrazione (tromboprofilassi)	10-12 h dall'ultima somministrazione
Fibrinolitici o trombolitici	Elevato in dosi terapeutiche	Oltre 24 h
Inibitori della trombina	Rischio molto elevato	10 giorni
Fondaparinux	Rischio aumentato	18-24 h

TABELLA VI. — *Blocchi loco-regionali e farmaci più idonei per il trattamento dei politraumatizzati.*

Patologia	Indicazione terapeutica	Farmaci	Referenze bibliografiche
Traumi complessiarto superiore	Blocco continuo del plesso brachiale per via interscalenica, infraclavare, paravertebrale	Bupivacaína 0,125% Ropivacaína 0,2% Levobupivacaína 0,125% Volume: 5-7 ml/h Infusione continua+boli a richiesta Aduvant: Clonidina 1 µg/ml Sufentanil 0,5-1 µg/ml	Vatashsky <i>et al.</i> ⁵⁸
Traumi complessiarto inferiore	Blocco continuo del plesso lombare Blocco del nervo femorale Blocco del nervo sciatico	Bupivacaína 0,125% Ropivacaína 0,2% Levobupivacaína 0,125% Volume: 5-15 ml/h Infusione continua+boli a richiesta Aduvant: Clonidina 1 µg/ml Sufentanil 0,5-1 µg/ml	Brands <i>et al.</i> ⁶⁰ Di Benedetto <i>et al.</i> ⁶¹
Traumi toracici	Epidurale continua Blocco paravertebrale	Bupivacaína 0,125% Ropivacaína 0,1-0,2% Levobupivacaína 0,125% Volume: 3-5 ml/h Infusione continua+boli a richiesta Aduvant: Clonidina 1 µg/ml Sufentanil 0,5-1 µg/ml Bupivacaína 0,125% Ropivacaína 0,2% Levobupivacaína 0,125% Volume: 5-10 ml/h Infusione continua	Karmakar <i>et al.</i> ⁶² Karmakar <i>et al.</i> ⁶³

zione? Per quanto tempo ancora deve essere sedato? Con quale target di analgo-sedazione?

Per il dolore da procedure (per il posizionamento di CVC o tracheostomia, nursing e mobilizzazione, medicazioni dolorose) occorre sempre programmare un adeguato piano di analgo-sedazione.

Si raccomanda, infine, di ricorrere sistematicamente a una serie di principi "di buona assistenza", da validare in successivi trial randomizzati controllati:

1° principio: rotazione dei metodi di sedazione ogni 3-5 giorni, quando il periodo di sedazione programmato è > 8 giorni. Quando è necessaria una sedazione prolungata con propofol, occorre mettere in atto le procedure per un precoce riconoscimento e trattamento della sindrome da infusione prolungata di propofol.

2° principio: darsi regole per il trattamento della tolleranza e dell'astinenza alla sospensione utilizzando: riduzione progressiva delle dosi giornaliere, e/o farmaci adiuvanti quali clonidina, ketamina, metadone, e/o un'adeguata rotazione dei farmaci impiegati.

3° principio: chiedersi a ogni day clinical round: perché è ancora sedato e ventilato?

4° principio: se vi è spazio per tecniche loco-regionali, preferirle sempre.

5° principio: darsi regole per la buona morte, anche utilizzando tecniche di sedazione terminale; per i pazienti terminali; ad esempio, già programmato, un piano di sedazione terminale in grado di prevenire fasi di delirio e/o di dolore totale incoercibile, associando analgesici maggiori e sedativi in infusione continua, sia nei pazienti intubati e collegati a ventilazione meccanica, sia nei pazienti in respiro spontaneo e in monitoraggio capnometrico (si rimanda alle linee guida sulle cure palliative in TI SIAARTI 2006).

Si raccomanda che nei protocolli operativi di reparto siano descritti accuratamente i metodi adottati e la periodicità di misura dell'analgesia e della sedazione.

Si raccomanda che nei protocolli operativi di reparto vengano descritte accuratamente le metodiche di infusione con raccomandazioni finalizzate alla riduzione dei rischi legati a un cattivo management sanitario (mancata misura del livello di analgesia e di sedazione, boli accidentali, brusche sospensioni, cattiva gestione dei cambi di deflusso-re o siringa, errori di diluizione, mancata annotazione delle variazioni di infusione e/o di concentrazione dei farmaci, inappropriato impiego dei miorelaxanti).

