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A COMPARITIVE STUDY OF EFFICACY AND SAFETY OF INTRAVENOUS IRON SUCROSE VS INTRAVENOUS FERRIC CARBOXY MALTOSE IN CORRECTING IRON DEFICIENCY ANAEMIA IN POST PARTUM PERIOD

Gynaecology

Dr. Anukrati Singh PG Resident ,Department Of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Teeranthkar Mahaveer University Moradabad , Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Poonam Singh* Professor, Department Of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Teeranthkar Mahaveer University Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh. *Corresponding Author

Dr. Shubhra Agarwal Associate Professor, Department Of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Teeranthkar Mahaveer University, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Post partum anemia needs a major concern not only to ensure healthy puerperum, better mother baby bonding, build up iron reserves in the puerpurae to have a better quality of life and also to ensure minimized incidence of anemia in next pregnancy and to crucially avoid maternal and perinatal mortalities. This co-morbid condition can be effectively treated with the help of intravenous iron therapy. This study aims to compare the efficacy and safety of intravenous ferric carboxymaltose with intravenous iron sucrose in treating anemia during post-partum period.

METHOD: This interventional prospective study conducted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at T.M.U Moradabad, India, encompassed a total of 120 postnatal women in the 2 equal predefined study group, pertaining to- Group A who received intravenous iron sucrose and Group B who received intravenous ferric carboxymaltose. The rise in Hemoglobin and serum ferritin levels and with the evaluation of its safety and tolerance were compared primarily at 24hr postpartum and secondarily at 3weeks post treatment amongst the two groups.

RESULTS: The mean rise in the hemoglobin level with ferric carboxymaltose was 2.35 gm/dl and with that of iron, sucrose was 1.51 gm/dl(p value <.01). The mean rise in the serum ferritin levels with ferric carboxymaltose was 53.03ng/ml and with iron sucrose was 43.91 ng/ml.(p value < .01). Ferric carboxymaltose was observed to be safer with less adverse events in comparison to the Iron sucrose.

CONCLUSION: Properties like ultra-short duration of treatment, fewer adverse reactions and better compliance makes FCM the first-line drug in the management of postpartum iron deficiency anemia.

KEYWORDS

Hemoglobin, Intravenous ferric carboxymaltose, Intravenous iron sucrose, Serum ferritin.

BACKGROUND

Iron deficiency anemia is the commonest nutritional deficiency in the world. Similarly maternal anemia is a major health concern especially in pregnancy and reproductive age group and developing countries have the highest incidence[1].

The factors responsible for and leading to iron deficiency anemia in pregnancy includes [2,3,4,5,6]

- Diet poor in iron content coupled with
- Regular menstrual losses
- Increased risk of infections or infestation.
- Exacerbated by the physiological effects of pregnancy.
- Blood losses at the time of delivery.
- Multiple number pregnancies in which iron is not supplemented.
- Closed spaced pregnancies.

Since the introduction of parenteral iron therapy, there have been 3 generations of parenteral iron-

1. 1st generation- high molecular weight iron dextran and iron-sorbitol-citric acid complex.
2. 2nd generation included- iron sucrose (IS) and low molecular weight iron dextran.
3. 3rd generation- ferric carboxymaltose (FCM) and ferric isomaltoside.

After the first trimester, treatment of IDA with IV iron appears superior to oral iron therapy with respect to a faster increase in the hemoglobin concentration and faster replenishment of body iron stores. The use of IV iron prior to delivery may reduce the need for blood transfusions in the postpartum period and constitutes an alternative to blood transfusion in profound IDA. Furthermore, IV iron administered as total dose infusion yields replenishment of body iron reserves within a few days compared with oral iron therapy.[7,8]

Ferric iron carboxymaltose as the studies suggests, has proven effective in the treatment of postpartum anemia. According to the manufacturer's instructions, up to 1,000 mg iron dissolved in 250 ml isotonic saline can be given as a single infusion over 15–60 min . The total-dose-infusion concept is convenient for the patient and can save resources in the health care system. In this study, we compare and evaluate the safety and efficacy of IV ferric carboxymaltose and iron sucrose in treatment of postpartum iron deficiency anemia.[9,10]

METHODOLOGY

- The sample size of 120 subjects was selected from the postpartum women admitted in maternity ward of obstetrics and gynaecology department who fulfilled the selection criteria.
- Written and informed consent was taken for getting enrolled in the study.
- After history taking and clinical examination, the iron deficiency anemia was confirmed by - Complete Blood Count and Peripheral Blood Picture done after 24 hours of delivery. The baseline serum ferritin levels were also done.
- Parenteral iron dosage was calculated according to the Hb deficit formula- [2.4 x Weight of the patient in Kgs (target Hb - Hb of the patient) + 500].
- All patients were given deworming therapy (Tab. Albendazole 400mg orally single dose).
- All Subjects were then divided into two groups (Group A and Group B) by envelope method of randomization, with 60 patients in each group:
- **Group A** received IV Iron Sucrose 200mg/day in multiple doses, on alternate days, by IV injection mixed with 100ml of normal saline (0.9%) over 15mins, till the required dose is completed.
- **Group B** received injection FCM according to the calculated dose of Hb deficit by infusing 500 or 750 or1000mg FCM in 100ml, 150ml or 250ml of normal saline over 15mins respectively. Additional required dose above 1000 mg was administered after 7 days of initial therapy.
- Patients were observed for any side effects like headache, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, pain and burning at injection site, rigor, fever, hypotension and hypertension, tingling sensation, itching or any other side effects during the therapy and for 1 hour after completion of infusion.
- All women were followed up after 4 weeks of receiving last dose of parenteral iron therapy. Repeat complete blood count and Serum ferritin levels were done and outcome was measured.

Statistical Analysis

The quantitative data was represented as their mean ± SD. Categorical and nominal data was expressed in percentage. The t-test was used for analyzing quantitative data, or else non parametric data was analyzed by **Mann Whitney U test** i.e. U=R- n(n+1)/2 [where R is the sum of ranks in the sample, and n is the number of items in the sample] and categorical data was analyzed by using **chi-square test.** The

significance threshold of p-value was set at <0.05. All analysis was carried out by using SPSS software version 21.

RESULTS

Total number of patients were 120, sixty in each group. Most of the females were between 20-29 years of age (71.7%) in both groups with no statistical difference between the groups (p-0.44). **Table no 1**. A total of 52.5% case were from lower socio-economic status (SES) while 40.8% were from middle socio-economic status indicating more prevalence of anaemia in poor and uneducated patients as shown in **Table number 2.**

Table number 3 shows booking status of patient and its correlation with average hemoglobin of that group. In group A total number of unbooked cases were 44 and their average hemoglobin was 9.06 which was lower as compared to booked 9.21. Similarly in group B, 49 cases of unbooked cases Hb was 8.75 in comparison to 11 booked cases with Hb of 9.5 indicating the importance of antenatal care.

Table number 4 depicts the difference in rise of haemoglobin between two groups. Mean baseline haemoglobin in sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group was 9.01 and 8.91 gm% respectively which improved to 10.52 and 11.26 gm% after intervention. The increase in hemoglobin levels was significantly more in Ferric Carboxymaltose group (2.35 gm%) as compared to sucrose group (1.51 gm%) (p<0.01). **Table number 5** shows post intervention, all the RBC indices i.e. MCV, MCH, MCHC and RDW improved significantly in both groups (p<0.05); however no difference was observed between sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group (p>0.05).

Table no 6 shows mean baseline ferritin levels in sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group was 27.26 and 25.69 ng/mL which improved to 65.93 and 86.24 ng/mL respectively after intervention. The increase in ferritin levels was significantly more in Ferric Carboxymaltose group (60.55 ng/mL) as compared to sucrose group (38.67 ng/mL) (p<0.01)

Table number 7 shows most common adverse reactions reported in sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group cases were pain and swelling at injection site (6.7%) and nausea/ vomiting (4.2% each). Other side effects includes metallic taste (6.7% vs 0%), dirrhoea (3.3% vs 1.7%), muscle cramps (1.7% vs 0%), constipation (1.7% vs 0%) and headache (1.7% vs 0%), which were slightly more prevalent in group B. The difference was however not statistically significant (p>0.05).

DISCUSSION

Postpartum anemia (defined as Hb<10 gm/dl) is social health problem in the world [9]. The prevalence of postpartum anemia is 27% and a postpartum haemoglobin (Hb) level of less than 8 g/dl is observed in 10% of women [10,11.]

Postpartum iron deficiency is a social problem as it has been associated with maternal postpartum depression and stress thereby hampering infant care, further leading to their developmental delay [12,13].

Oral iron therapy is currently the treatment of choice for the majority of patients with iron deficiency anemia but it has disadvantages like poor absorption, poor compliance and gastro-intestinal (GI) side effects. Parenteral iron helps in restoring iron stores faster and more effectively than oral Iron. Intravenous iron sucrose is safe, effective, and economic in comparison to the repeated and painful intramuscular iron injections. By far, the largest experience in the published literature is with this formulation. **Kharde P et al.** in their study observed that Intravenous iron sucrose administration increases the haemoglobin level and serum ferritin levels more rapidly, without any serious adverse effect in comparison with oral ferrous sulphate in women with iron deficiency anemia in the postnatal period [15].

In Our Study most of the females were between 20-29 years of age (71.7%), pointing that most women were entering their reproductive age with insufficient iron stores. This was because of similar reasons mentioned before in addition with- increasing growth needs, chronic blood loss due to menstruation or hookworm infestation, lack of iron in the diet, vegetarian food forming the major portion of their diet, and these women were very likely to succumb to increasing iron demands of pregnancy and postpartum period thus developing anemia. A similar study by **Breymann et al.** reported the mean age in their study as 27.7yrs [14].

STUDY	MEAN AGE	
	IS	FCM
Naqash et al (2018) [23]	27·32 ± 4·15 yrs	30·41 ± 7·99 yrs
Vitthal Hol et al (2015) [19]	20-25 years	20-25 years
Joshi et al (2016) [16]	18-25 yrs (74.7%)	18-25 yrs (71.1%)
PRESENT STUDY	20-29 yrs	20-29 yrs

The study by **Irfan Ullah et al.** states the prevalence of anemia among pregnant women to be as high as 67.6%. Also the percentage was high in illiterate 88%, lower socioeconomic condition 80%, and 30-37 age pregnant women, similarly in this study most of the females were uneducated or were educated below higher secondary, 79 patients (65.9%)] and belonged to lower socio-economic status 63 patients (52.5%)], it shows that education has an influence over anemia through knowledge on health (such as need for antenatal visit, iron requirements, better compliance to stick to medical advices), occupation and socio-economic status [21].

Study	Socio-economic Status In Is Group	Socio-economic Status In Fcm Group
Joshi et al (2016) [16]	low- 68.7% middle - 31.3%	low- 67.8% middle- 32.2%
Garg. R et al (2015) [24]	Lower middle class	Lower middle class
Present Study	lower (61.7%)	Middle (48.3%)

RESULTS

On comparing the response to these two drugs for replenishment of iron deficiency, we found that Ferric Carboxymaltose caused relatively rapid rise in Haemoglobin levels. Mean baseline haemoglobin in iron sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group was 9.01 and 8.91 gm% which improved to 10.52 and 11.26 gm% respectively after intervention. The increase in haemoglobin levels were significantly more in Ferric Carboxymaltose group (2.35 gm%) as compared to sucrose group (1.51 gm%) (p<0.01).

Similar to present study, **Sharma N et al.** observed a mean increase in Hb (p- value <0.001, 0.001) and ferritin (p value< 0.001, 0.001) in both the groups. Intergroup comparison showed FCM was superior to IS (p-value <0.001) for both rise in heamoglobin as well as serum ferritin levels [17]. **Keklik M et al.** also observed an expected increase in haemoglobin (Hb) and median ferritin levels in both groups. Post-treatment ferritin levels increased more significantly in the FCM group than in the IS group (58.15 vs. 29.65 ng/mL, respectively) (p<0.001) [18].

Lunagariya M et al. in their study observed mean rise of Hb as 1.9 gm/dl for FCM group and 1.66 gm/dl for iron sucrose group, which was statistically significant. Serum ferritin level in ferric carboxymaltose group also rose more (83.9 ng/ml) as compared to (76.06 ng/ ml) iron sucrose group [22].

CONCLUSION

The comparative study between IV Iron Sucrose and IV Ferric Carboxymaltose yielded following results-

1. Most of the subjects in Most of the females were between 20-29 years of age (71.7%) in both groups with no statistical difference between the groups (p-0.44).
2. A total of 52.5% case were from lower socio-economic status (SES) while 40.8% were from middle socio-economic status. The average heamoglobin in cases belonging to lower socio-economic strata was found to be lower (8.77gm/dl) as compared to other two classes (middle class- 9.17gm/dl and upper class 9.63 gm/dl). No statistical difference was however observed between the groups with respect to Socio-economic status (p-0.44).
3. A total of 22.5% cases were booked either inside or outside our hospital while 77.5% cases were unregistered pregnancies. The average pretreatment hemoglobin in booked cases (9.21 and 9.5gm/dl in group A and B respectively) was higher in comparison to average pretreatment hemoglobin in unbooked cases (9.06 and 8.75gm/dl in group A and B respectively) No statistical difference was observed between the groups with respect to booking status of cases (p-0.06).
4. Mean baseline hemoglobin in iron sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group was 9.01 and 8.91 gm% which improved to 10.52 and 11.26 gm% respectively after intervention. The increase in hemoglobin levels was significantly more in FCM group (2.35 gm%) as compared to IS group (1.51 gm%) (p<0.01).
5. Post intervention, all the RBC indices i.e. MCV, MCH, MCHC and RDW improved significantly in both groups (p<0.05);

however, no difference was observed between iron sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group (p>0.05).

6. Mean baseline ferritin levels in sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group was 27.26 and 25.69 ng/mL which improved to 65.93 and 86.24 ng/mL respectively after intervention. The increase in ferritin levels was significantly more in Ferric Carboxymaltose group (60.55 ng/mL) as compared to iron sucrose group (38.67 ng/mL) (p<0.01).
7. Common adverse reactions reported in sucrose and Ferric Carboxymaltose group cases were pain & swelling at injection site (10% vs 3.3%) and nausea/ vomiting (3.3% vs 5% each). Other reported adverse events were also slightly more prevalent in iron sucrose group, the difference was however not statistically significant (p>0.05), and there were no major side effects.

We thus conclude that Intravenous ferric carboxymaltose administration increases the hemoglobin level more rapidly in comparison to iron sucrose in women suffering from with IDA in postnatal period. Ferric carboxymaltose is associated with fewer side effects as compared to iron sucrose. It has the benefits of increasing the iron content more rapidly thereby reducing the need for multiple application and thus also increases patient comfort.

Table 1: Age Wise Distribution Of Cases

Age	Group		Total
	A	B	
20-24	19	20	39
	31.7%	33.3%	32.5%
25-29	26	21	47
	43.3%	35.0%	39.2%
30-35	15	17	32
	25.0%	28.3%	26.7%
>35	0	2	2
	0.0%	3.3%	1.7%
Total	60	60	120
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
p- value - 0.44			

Table 2: Distribution Of Cases According To Socioeconomic Status.

Socio-economic Status	Group		Total
	GROUP A	GROUP B	
Lower	37	26	63
	61.7%	43.3%	52.5%
Middle	20	29	49
	33.3%	48.3%	40.8%
Upper	3	5	8
	5.0%	8.3%	6.7%
Total	60	60	120
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
p- value - 0.13			

Table 3: Effect On Haemoglobin In Booked Versus Unbooked Patients.

Booking Of The Patient				
Booking Status	Group A		Group B	
	No. Of Patients	Hemoglobin Pre Treatment (gm/dl)	No. Of Patients	Hemoglobin Pre Treatment (gm/dl)
Booked	16	9.21	11	9.5
Unbooked	44	9.06	49	8.75
Total	60		60	

Table No 4: Effect On Haemoglobin On Group A And B After Treatment.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	p- value (Inter-group)	p- value (Intra-group IS)	p- value (Intra-group FCM)
Pre treatment Hemoglobin (gm/dl)	A	60	9.01	1.02	0.59	<0.01	<0.01
	B	60	8.91	1.11			
Post treatment Hemoglobin (gm/dl)	A	60	10.52	1.26	<0.01		
	B	60	11.26	1.21			

Table 5: Different Rbc Indices In Both The Groups Post Treatment.

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	p- value	p- value (Intra-group IS)	p- value (Intra-group FCM)
Pre treatment MCV (fl)	A	60	76.55	11.00	0.43	0.011	0.013
	B	60	74.95	11.03			
Post treatment MCV(fl)	A	60	78.03	9.05	0.90		
	B	60	78.29	13.73			
Pre treatment MCH(pg)	A	60	27.32	3.47	0.81	<0.01	<0.01
	B	60	27.10	6.12			
Post treatment MCH(pg)	A	60	28.98	3.06	0.50		
	B	60	29.73	7.96			
Pre treatment MCHC(gm/dl)	A	60	30.06	2.28	0.63	<0.01	<0.01
	B	60	29.83	2.82			
Post treatment MCHC(gm/dl)	A	60	31.55	2.26	0.60		
	B	60	31.34	2.17			
Pre treatment RDW(%)	A	60	18.66	3.54	0.67	<0.01	<0.01
	B	60	18.39	3.36			
Post treatment RDW(%)	A	60	15.14	3.20	0.02		
	B	60	16.53	3.32			

Table 6 : Effect On Serum Ferritin In Both The Groups Post Treatment.

Ferritin Levels (ng/ml)	Group	N	Mean	SD	p- value	p- value (Intra-group S)	p- value (Intra-group FCM)
Pre treatment	A	60	27.26	30.65	0.76	<0.01	<0.01
	B	60	25.69	25.08			
Post treatment	A	60	65.93	29.32	<0.01		
	B	60	86.24	28.61			

Table 7: Side Effects Post Treatment In Both The Groups.

Adverse Reactions	Group		Total	p-value
	A	B		
Muscle Cramps	1	0	1	0.5
	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	
Diarrhoea	2	1	3	1.00
	3.3%	1.7%	2.5%	
Nausea/ Vomiting	2	3	5	1.00
	3.3%	5.0%	4.2%	
Metallic Taste	4	0	4	0.12
	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%	
Constipation	1	0	1	0.50
	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	
Headache	1	0	1	0.50
	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	
Pain & Swelling at site	6	2	8	0.27
	10.0%	3.3%	6.7%	

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