An evaluation of patient experience for awake arthroscopic shoulder surgery

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Introduction

- Interscalene block is commonly performed to provide post-operative analgesia for shoulder surgery.
- Due to patient co-morbidity or choice, regional anaesthesia alone may be the preferred technique [1].
- We sought to evaluate patient experience of awake arthroscopic shoulder surgery at our centre (sub-acromial decompression, rotator cuff repair, capsular release, and acromioclavicular joint excision); focussing on intra-operative efficacy and patient satisfaction.

Methods

- Patients received ultrasound guided interscalene and superficial cervical plexus blocks, using 10ml 0.5% levobupivacaine and 10ml 2% lignocaine with 1:200000 adrenaline (Xylocaine®).
- Arthroscopic port sites were infiltrated with 1% Xylocaine® by the operating surgeon.
- Patients remained awake, but were offered midazolam sedation if preferred; verbal contact was maintained throughout.
- 25 patients were contacted for telephone follow-up after they had been discharged post-procedure.

Results

- All patients were satisfied with the pre-operative explanation of the conduct of anaesthesia and surgery.
- 92% reported no discomfort during surgery; one patient experienced mild hand discomfort from positioning, and another a sensation of warmth without pain.
- Analgesia was effective in recovery and during the first post-operative night generally (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Timing of first pain experienced

- 48% of patients had some recollection of surgery, but none were troubled by this.

- All patients were satisfied with their experience (Figure 2), and stated that they would be happy with an awake anaesthetic technique in the future.

Conclusion

- With appropriate patient preparation, awake regional anaesthesia for arthroscopic shoulder surgery is both effective and a positive patient experience.
- Emphasising the importance of taking regular oral analgesia, including before post-operative pain occurs, is vital.
- We are in the process of producing a leaflet outlining the conduct of anaesthesia and surgery, to further enhance the information patients receive prior to undergoing their procedure.