**Title**
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**Citation**
泌尿器科紀要 (1994), 40(9): 833-835

**Issue Date**
1994-09

**URL**
http://hdl.handle.net/2433/115347

**Type**
Departmental Bulletin Paper

**Textversion**
publisher

Kyoto University
SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF HEMORRHAGIC CYSTITIS SECONDARY TO CYCLOPHOSPHAMIDE CHEMOTHERAPY WITH INTRAVESICAL INSTILLATION OF PROSTAGLANDIN F$_2$ALPHA

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The treatment of cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis is difficult. We report a successful case of severe cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis treated with intravesical instillation of prostaglandin F$_2$alpha. A 32-year-old woman underwent high-dose cyclophosphamide conditioning before the autologous bone marrow transplantation. She developed clot retention which required continuous irrigation with normal saline. The patient had failed to respond to continuous bladder irrigation with saline and intravesical administration of 1% alum. Fifty ml of prostaglandin F$_2$alpha solution (1 mg in 100 ml normal saline) was instilled into the bladder, with a dwelling time of 60 minutes, three times a day for 5 days. The hematuria cleared completely 3 days after therapy. The only adverse effect was bladder spasm which was controlled with oxybutynin chloride. The success of this therapy suggests that prostaglandin F$_2$alpha is a safe and useful therapy for hemorrhagic cystitis secondary to cyclophosphamide chemotherapy.


Key words: Prostaglandin F$_2$alpha, Hemorrhagic cystitis, Bladder instillation

INTRODUCTION

Cyclophosphamide is a carcinostatic agent that is used in the treatment of solid tumors, lymphoproliferative disorders, immune related disorders, nephrotic syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis and acute transplant rejection$^{1,2}$. One of the most common and nuisant complications of cyclophosphamide is hemorrhagic cystitis$^{3}$. The exact mechanism of bladder mucosal damage by cyclophosphamide remains undefined. However, it seems to be associated with acrolein, a urotoxic byproduct of microsomal metabolism of cyclophosphamide which is excreted in the urine$^{4}$. It has been postulated that the urothelium is destructed by direct contract with acrolein causing edema, inflammation, increased permeability, hemorrhage and necrosis$^{5}$. Recently, Mesna (2-mercaptoethane sulfonate) was developed specifically to bind acrolein and was proved to be an effective uroprotective agent when administered parenterally$^{6}$. However, once hemorrhagic cystitis is established, its treatment is very difficult with overall poor results. More recently, intravesical instillation of prostaglandins has been shown to be an effective alternative for the treatment of cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis$^{4,7}$. We report a case of intractable cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis and the good response of the patient to intravesical instillation of a prostaglandin F$_2$alpha.

CASE REPORT

A 32-year-old woman was admitted to the Hematology-Oncology Service for autologous bone marrow transplantation because of malignant lymphoma. The patient underwent high-dose cyclophosphamide (13.2 g) conditioning before the transplantation. On hospital day 25, she developed clot retention which required bladder irrigation at the bedside and continuous blad-
der irrigation with saline. Intravesical administration of 1% alum started, but it readily clogged the catheter and required frequent catheter replacement. After evacuation of the clots, 100 ml of 1 mg % prostaglandin F₂α was instilled. Because of severe bladder spasms, the volume was reduced to 50 ml and allowed to remain for 1 hour. The bladder was drained and another 50 ml was instilled for 1 hour. After this 2-hour treatment, the patient was started on continuous bladder irrigation with normal saline for 2 hours and this regimen was repeated three times a day for 5 days. Oxybutynin chloride (3 mg three times daily) was administered to control the bladder spasms. The hematuria cleared completely 3 days after completion of prostaglandin therapy. Her urine has remained clear for 6 months. The patient did not receive sodium 2-mercaptoethane sulfonate (Mesna) as prophylaxis for cyclophosphamide-induced cystitis because this was not part of the protocol used, nor was it approved for this use. No systemic adverse effects of the prostaglandins were observed on blood pressure, temperature, or heart rate, all of which were monitored every 15 minutes during the intravesical therapy.

**DISCUSSION**

Hemorrhagic cystitis following cyclophosphamide chemotherapy is not uncommon. Foad and Hess⁹ have reported that the incidence of hemorrhagic cystitis associated with cyclophosphamide chemotherapy ranges from 2% to 40% in patients taking long-term, low-dose cyclophosphamide. According to Droller et al., the mortality was 75% in patients with massive hemorrhage who had been treated with high doses of intravenous cyclophosphamide.

The best treatment for cyclophosphamide-induced hematuria is detoxification of the acrolein with agent such as 2-mercaptoethane sulfonate. However, once established, treatment depends on the degree of hematuria. In mild cases, hematuria may be treated with continuous irrigation of the bladder to prevent clot retention and allow spontaneous bladder hemostasis. Other therapeutic methods include bladder irrigation with alum¹³, silver nitrate¹², or formalin¹².

Recently, preliminary reports suggests that there may be a role for prostaglandins in prevention or treatment of cyclophosphamide cystitis. Mohiuddin et al. successfully controlled cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis in one case by instillation of prostaglandin E₂ (dinosprostone). Levine et al. reported that complete resolution of gross hematuria occurred in 9 of 18 consecutive patients who received intravesical prostaglandin F₂α for severe hemorrhagic cystitis following cyclophosphamide chemotherapy⁶.

The exact mechanism of the action of the prostaglandins in the urinary tract is not known. Levine et al. propose that prostaglandins control bleeding by causing smooth muscle contraction in blood vessels in the mucosa and submucosa. This allows hemostasis by natural physiologic mechanisms as opposed to the fixation of urothelial tissue by formalin and silver nitrate⁸. It appears that prostaglandins have multiple mechanisms by which they can prevent cystitis. They could increase mucus production in the bladder, thus affording protection from contact with the acrolein. They could reduce the inflammatory response by reducing histamine secretion, hydrolases and effectiveness of cell-mediated inflammation.

In conclusion, intravesical instillation of prostaglandin F₂α was completely successful in a patient with intractable hemorrhagic cystitis following cyclophosphamide chemotherapy. Further studies to determine the optimum dose of prostaglandin F₂α, duration of treatment and the best way for prophylaxis of bladder spasms will be needed. Although the success of therapy in the present case is encouraging, a prospective randomized trial comparing prostaglandin therapy to conventional therapy seems indicated. Obviously, the best treatment of cyclophosphamide-induced hemorrhagic cystitis is prevention of direct contact with acrolein. However,
intravesical instillation of prostaglandin F₂α may be a useful therapeutic option for established hemorrhagic cystitis following cyclophosphamide chemotherapy.

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(Received on April 4, 1994) (Accepted on May 13, 1994)