

Propranolol is Not Effective in Preventing the Progression to Severe Portal Hypertensive Gastropathy in Cirrhotic Patients who Had Undergone Variceal Eradication: A Randomised Controlled Trial

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Abstract : Background and Objectives: PHG is an important source of gastrointestinal bleeding in patients with portal hypertension. Aim: To assess the progression to severe portal hypertensive gastropathy(PHG) in patients with cirrhosis who were treated with maximum tolerated dose of propranolol, after variceal eradication to grade II or below. Methods: Cirrhotic patients(child A and B) presenting with upper gastrointestinal bleeding with endoscopic findings of mild or no PHG were followed up over 6 months after variceal eradication to assess the progression to severe PHG. Included patients were randomised to either maximum tolerated doses of propranolol (group A) or to no treatment (group B). Primary end point of the study were the development of gastrointestinal bleed, evidence of hepatic decompensation and death. Progression to severe PHG were compared between the two groups. Results: 56 patients (49 males) were enrolled (group A = 28, group B = 28). 8 patients were excluded from final analysis (gi bleed=5, encephalopathy=2,HCC=1 including 4 deaths).3 patients were lost to follow-up, and 1 developed intolerance to propranolol. Mean dose of propranolol used was 60 mg per day. Progression to severe PHG in the fundus over 6 months was 23.8% in group A versus 15.8 % in group B (p = 0.52). Severe PHG was noted in body in 14.3% in group A versus 21.1% in group B (p = 0.57). 23.8 % in group A had progression to severe PHG compared with 15.8 % in group B (p =0.52). There was no statistically significant difference in the progression of PHG between the two groups(p=0.43). Conclusion: In this short term study propranolol was found not to prevent the progression to severe portal hypertensive gastropathy in cirrhotic patients who had undergone endotherapy for esophageal varices.

Keywords : propranolol, portal hypertensive gastropathy, cirrhotic patients, gastroenterology

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