President’s Column:
Perioperative Surgical Home: An Opportunity for Critical Care Anesthesiologists

Currently, there is a re-animation process surrounding the role of anesthesiologists and perioperative surgical care with the concept of a perioperative surgical home (PSH). This re-animation process has already begun in Europe, and there are some lessons to be learned from the European model, including the use of Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS). Following the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists Annual Meeting in Montréal on Friday, May 16th, the International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS) is having an afternoon symposium titled, “Enhanced Surgical Recovery Program: The Role of the Anesthesiologist” on Sunday, May 18th, 2014 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm during the IARS 2014 Annual Meeting.

The development of the PSH represents additional opportunities for anesthesiologists for perioperative care participation and, specifically, anesthesiologists with critical care subspecialty expertise. Critical care anesthesiologists are uniquely poised for this opportunity because of their knowledge and expertise in the perioperative continuum, including the use of their primary expertise as anesthesiologists. Within the scope of critical care, providers have the expertise to prepare and optimize critically ill patients preoperatively for elective and emergent surgical procedures. The practice of critical care by its very nature interacts within the larger health care system and often includes the transfer of patients between hospitals for their optimal care and discharge planning. The latter involves transitions of care, including early mobility during the postoperative period to enable earlier discharge and planning for skilled facility placement at a rehabilitation clinic or nursing home. Transitions of care are one aspect of the PSH that can allow for more coordinated care, including improved communication with those providing care after discharge to better optimize patient follow-up and quality of care.

With the advent of the PSH, there remain numerous yet-to-be answered questions, and opportunities abound for contributions to the development of this model. Improving patient care throughout the perioperative continuum with the PSH model represents a goal for the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists to work toward, and our members can seek potential opportunities to contribute their expertise to the various aspects of the PSH model. This may require critical care anesthesiologists outside Europe to begin to think differently about how their unique background of critical care experience affords opportunity. Hopefully there will be ongoing dialogue about areas for potential contributions to the PSH within the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists. I am looking forward to seeing all of you on May 16th for the SOCCA Annual Meeting in Montréal, Canada. Additional meeting details are available at www.socca.org.

This is my last newsletter as President of SOCCA. I have had the opportunity to work with a group of talented, terrific individuals – from the Board of Directors and executive directors to those who have volunteered their expertise and efforts to advance SOCCA this year and in the past. It’s been my honor to serve as the President of this organization and I appreciate all the efforts that have been put forth by many individuals collectively to benefit SOCCA. The continued partnership with IARS should continue to propel SOCCA’s future goals and I look forward to continued contributions on behalf of SOCCA.

Brenda Fahy
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

E-mail
E-mail inquiries to SOCCA at:
SOCCA@iars.org

Meeting information:
SOCCAmeetings@iars.org

Membership information:
SOCCA@iars.org

Web Page
Visit the SOCCA website at:
www.SOCCA.org

Membership
Membership in SOCCA is open to all anesthesiologists and residents in approved anesthesiology programs. Visit www.socca.org/membership.php for complete information on SOCCA membership.

SOCCA Dues
Dues are $160 for active members; $110 for affiliate members and $25 for educational members. Medical Student Membership, individuals in full-time training in an accredited school of medicine, is free. Dues may be paid online at www.SOCCA.org/membership.php.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Editorial Policy
The opinions presented are those of the authors only, not of SOCCA. Drug dosages, accuracy and completeness of content are not guaranteed by SOCCA.

Editor
Liza Weavind, M.D.
Associate Professor
Director, Critical Care Fellowship
Department of Anesthesiology
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, TN
liza.weavind@vanderbilt.edu

Associate Editor
Jordan E. Brand, M.D.
San Francisco VA Medical Center
University of California
Berkeley, CA
jbrandmd@gmail.com

Editorial Board
Francis X. Dillon, M.D.
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A Note from the Editor to SOCCA Members:
If you would like to contribute a review for a Fellowship Program at your institution in a future issue of the SOCCA Interchange, please contact jmcgrath@iars.org.
ECMO – The Extreme Panacea Machine

William T. O’Byrne, III, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Anesthesiology
Division of Critical Care and Perioperative Medicine
UAB Hospital

“All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong, and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride.” — Sophocles, Antigone

In the early 1970s researchers got the idea that the “heart-lung” machine used for cardiac surgery might have applications outside the operating room. During that time case reports appeared in the literature describing the use of the extra-corporeal membrane oxygenator (ECMO) to treat severe pre-transplant cardiac or pulmonary disease in children, many times with success. In 1989, the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO) was formed as a “consortium of health care professionals and scientists who are dedicated to the development and evaluation of novel therapies for support of failing organ systems” and the organization keeps statistics and publishes guidelines for both institution of ECMO and when it should be either 1) not considered or 2) when it should be discontinued if it is started emergently and there are contraindicating patient factors. It is important to remember that ECMO was and still is a therapy primarily considered for use in children and neonates with refractory respiratory or cardiac failure. However, as would be expected, it has found its way into the adult patient population, and there is a body of largely non-prospective evidence to suggest that it may increase survival in acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) patients, those with other forms of pulmonary failure, and cardiac arrest.3–5

All hail CESAR
The signature (and only) prospective, randomized ECMO study in an adult population was undertaken in 2009, when Peek and colleagues conducted the CESAR (Conventional ventilatory support versus Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation for Severe Adult Respiratory failure) trial in the United Kingdom.6 The study meant to answer the following questions: 1) is ECMO safe; and 2) is it cost-effective, using that country’s quality-adjusted life year (QALY) method? The investigators concluded that ECMO was relatively safe and cost-effective by U.K. standards, yet it was met with considerable criticism on methodological grounds and its (in)applicability to other health systems, notably the “resource infinite” U.S. model.7–9 One commentator noted that, “survival without severe disability was achieved but at approximately twice the cost and twice the length of stay.”10 The authors also touched upon what will be an increasingly greater problem – “reasonableness of access.”

Once such reasonableness problem concerns patients awaiting lung transplantation. Since ECMO emerged as a therapy for those with respiratory or cardiac failure refractory to other treatments, the medical literature is sprinkled with case reports of patients who have survived despite the odds. In 2013, Hoopes and colleagues concluded that using “artificial lung technology” is both technically feasible and logistically viable.11 Interestingly, the ELSO guidelines counsel against routinely using ECMO for patients awaiting transplants.2 The guidelines point out that ECMO therapy is expensive and hazardous, not to mention the fact that transplantable organs, particularly lungs, are increasingly scarce. Furthermore, ECMO is extremely resource intensive. The ELSO’s “Guidelines for ECMO Centers” is quite exhaustive in scope and detail, and also states that a center should have at least six patients cannulated per year.

Who may live and who may die?
Much like the time when ventilators were novel and few hospitals had them, the advent of ECMO will pose many ethical dilemmas; however the following discussion will be confined to the scarcity of ECMO centers and circuits. Per ELSO guidelines, a phalanx of clinicians of various levels is required to initiate, maintain, and coordinate ECMO care, which centers on each program’s medical directory. The toll on families is high and multi-factorial, and thus requires specially trained counseling personnel.12 However, the ELSO guidelines do not discuss the potential need to triage patients who may fall within the criteria for inclusion. Consider the following scenario: a facility has six ECMO circuits, staff and resources to safely maintain five, and four patients receiving treatment, none of whom are projected for de-cannulation criteria in the next several days. The community has seen an unusually large number of H1N1 patients and the medical intensive care unit (MICU) has 2 such patients who meet ECMO criteria: both are young and relatively healthy, with refractory ARDS and no secondary organ failure. However, only one can be safely cannulated due to institutional resource limitations. Which patient will it be and who decides? The ELSO charges each institution with answering such dilemmas but gives a dearth of actual guidance.

Such an approach seems to be fraught with peril, leaving families grieving and hospitals grasping at ethical straws. Furthermore, there seems to be no standardized triage process among recognized ECMO centers. However, one may consider the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) as a template for the

Continued on page 4
ECMO – The Extreme Panacea Machine, continued

Continued from page 3

stewardship of ECMO as an increasingly used but scarce resource. UNOS is centralized nationally, with a board of directors to ensure both quality and equality. Of course, there have been news accounts of patients who circumvented this system to obtain a transplant, but they are few. UNOS appears to function well. One could consider the “ECMO unit” (machine + staff) akin to a solid organ: much in demand and very scarce. A “United Network for ECMO Sharing” would function in much the same way as UNOS. One benefit would be that approval for ECMO cannulation in clinically and ethically challenging cases could be made by an impartial committee to ensure justice for candidates (in the above example, what if one of the patients was a close relative of a prominent donor or a relative of the program director?). Obviously, there would be barriers to such an organizational scheme. For example, some families may not have the means to pay for safe critical care transport to the nearest center with an available circuit, particularly if the patient lacks health insurance, let alone the cost of weeks or more of lodging. What is clear is that at some point society must determine when and if ECMO is a treatment for which the financial burden is worth sharing.

Our center alone has generated a good deal of local publicity on ECMO, one news outlet dubbing it the “extreme flu machine.” and so it is simply a matter of time before there must be a public debate about fair use. Only more independent, prospective or well done observational research on ECMO in the U.S. can help answer emerging ethical and clinical questions unique to our healthcare culture. The sooner the better.

References

13. UNOS. United Network for Organ Sharing.
Fellowship Review: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

The Fellowship in Critical Care Medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) takes pride in sculpting outstanding perioperative physicians with the skill set to become tomorrow’s leaders in the field of critical care. Our critical care fellows encounter a complex and varied spectrum of pathology, one that includes the full range of surgical and nonsurgical patients. Fellows are active participants in the care of the acutely ill patient, with emphasis on an evidence-based and family-centered approach.

The ten-bed Trauma Intensive Care Unit (ICU) houses the patients of the busy Acute Care Surgery and Trauma Surgery teams with ample trauma volume. The Surgical ICU is a fifteen-bed unit admitting a wide variety of general surgical, neuroscience (active open and endovascular service) transplant (liver, pancreas, kidney), and thoracic surgery (tracheal and parenchymal work) patients needing advanced care. The sixteen-bed Cardiovascular ICU cares for a wide variety of operative cardiac and vascular surgery patients including those patients needing ventricular assist devices and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), thoracic aortic surgical cases as well as other complex vascular surgery. Alongside the ICU rotations, fellows receive advanced ECMO training on a two-week rotation at Boston Children’s Hospital. These rotations comprise nine training months, leaving three months of elective time. Popular choices include transesophageal echocardiography with the Cardiology Department, advanced operating room transesophageal echocardiography, radiology, blood banking, and other medicine subspecialties.

The program’s emphasis on education begins with weekly comprehensive journal club sessions. Three to four major articles are covered on topics spanning the entire spectrum of critical care medicine. Additionally, subspecialists in cardiology, nephrology, radiology, perfusion, transfusion medicine, pharmacy and other divisions form the backbone of our fellow-level weekly didactic lecture series. A weekly echocardiography conference also covers major topics and teaching cases in both TTE and TEE.

Furthering their education, all fellows partake in an intense, ten-session transthoracic echocardiography class in the innovative Cardiac Anesthesia Simulation Center. These sessions form the foundation upon which fellows build their skills in focused transthoracic echocardiography (FTTE). Use of FTTE in an acutely ill patient is emphasized at BIDMC as a way to gather useful information quickly and rule out life-threatening diagnoses. At the end of the year, fellows are comfortable with using surface and transesophageal echocardiography in their practice and take the Examination of Special Competence in Adult Echocardiography offered by the National Board of Echocardiography. Many have gone on to start critical care ultrasound programs at other institutions.

As a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, BIDMC has the opportunity to collaborate with the other major academic institutions in the city. Fellows are encouraged to join any of the ongoing, accessible, grant-funded and world-class research projects in the division. Projects range from early mobility initiatives in the ICU to cutting-edge ideas using three-dimensional transthoracic echocardiography or clinical research in aspects of acute respiratory distress syndrome. Most recently, the division received a 5.3 million dollar grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to advance the use of systems engineering and information technology in enabling patient and family-centered care. Fellows are active participants in this project.

Interested candidates should send enquiries by email to:
sshaefi@bidmc.harvard.edu
(Shahzad Shaefi, M.D.) Program Director
kgranquist@bidmc.harvard.edu
(Karen Granquist, J.D.) Fellowship Program Coordinator
Plan to attend this meeting if you are a(n)...

- Critical Care Specialists
- Perioperative Physicians
- Clinical and Research Scientists
- Intensivists
- Other Healthcare Professionals Interested in Critical Care Medicine

Online Registration is available at www.SOCCA.org
Welcome to the SOCCA 27th Annual Meeting and Critical Care Update in Montréal, Canada! For the first time this year, the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists (SOCCA) Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS) 2014 Annual Meeting and International Science Symposium. SOCCA registrants will be able to take advantage of even more valuable education sessions, beginning with the SOCCA 27th Annual Meeting on May 16 and continuing with a full day focused on critical care at the IARS 2014 Annual Meeting on May 17.

The Annual Meeting Program Committee, comprised of Dr. Carlee Clark, Dr. Patricia Murphy and Dr. Daryl Kor, has constructed a stimulating program with sessions on the latest updates in the practice of critical care, original research presented by your colleagues in the poster room, and many opportunities for networking including a reception to conclude the meeting.

Sessions Include:

**Session I**
The SOCCA 27th Annual Meeting will kick off with a session focused on RV: The Forgotten Ventricle in the ICU. Topics will include management of acute pulmonary hypertension, the role of right mechanical heart assist and bedside point of care ultrasound assessment.

**Session II**
Celebrating Science, the second session of the Annual Meeting, will introduce the important publications that are valuable to critical care medicine now while highlighting abstracts presented by your peers.

**Session III**
Biomedical and Health Informatics in the ICU, will discuss ways to improve healthcare and new methods for achieving this goal.

**Session IV**
Session IV will evaluate best practices for Interactive Case Management.

**Critical-Care Focused Day – May 17**
The Saturday IARS education program offers a special focus on critical care, including two SOCCA Workshops, a Panel and a Problem-Based Learning Discussion session:
- SOCCA: Critical Care Ultrasound Workshop
- SOCCA: Perioperative ACLS Simulation Workshop
- SOCCA: From the ICU to the OR: Critical Illness Intraoperative Decisions in the OR
- SOCCA: A Complex Challenge: Spinal Instrumentation Requiring Aggressive Resuscitation Techniques and Multimodal Analgesia

We are confident that you will find this combined meeting a rewarding experience! Enjoy the beautiful city of Montréal and all it has to offer!

Sincerely,

Brenda G. Fahy, M.D., MCCM
SOCCA President
Faculty and Program Committee

John P. Abenstein, M.S.E.E., M.D.
Associate Professor of Anesthesiology
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Ruben J. Azocar, M.D.
Associate Professor
Associate Chair, Department of Anesthesiology
Tufts University School of Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts

James Blum, M.D.
Chief, Critical Care and Surgical Specialty Anesthesia
Emory University Hospital
Assistant Professor
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

Daniel R. Brown, M.D., Ph.D., FCCM
Associate Professor of Anesthesiology
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine
Chair, Division of Critical Care Medicine
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Carlee A. Clark, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Anesthesia and Perioperative Medicine
Medical University of South Carolina
Charleston, South Carolina

Andre A. Denault, M.D.
Anesthesiologist and Critical Care Physician
Montreal Heart Institute
Professor of Anesthesiology
Department of Surgery, Intensive Care Division
Montreal University Health Center
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Clifford S. Deutschman, M.S., M.D., MCCM
Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care
Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care
Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Brenda G. Fahy, M.D., MCCM
Professor of Anesthesiology
Chief, Division of Critical Care Medicine
Medical Director, Shands Hospital Critical Care-Anesthesiology Services
University of Florida College of Medicine
Gainesville, Florida

Steven Greenberg, M.D.
Director of Critical Care Services,
Evanston Hospital
NorthShore University HealthSystem
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Anesthesiology Critical Care
University of Chicago
Pritzker School of Medicine
Chicago, Illinois

Erin K. Hennessy, M.D.
Clinical Instructor of Anesthesia
Critical Care Medicine
Stanford University Medical Center
Palo Alto, California

Daryl J. Kor, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology
Department of Anesthesiology
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine
Rochester, Minnesota

Massimiliano Meineri, M.D.
Director of Perioperative Echocardiography
Peter Munk Cardiac Centre
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Vivek Moitra, M.D.
Associate Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology
Associate Medical Director
Surgical Intensive Care Unit
Associate Program Director
Critical Care Medicine Fellowship,
Division of Critical Care
Columbia University College of Physicians
New York, New York

Patricia Murphy, M.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Anesthesia and Pain Management
Toronto General Hospital
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Michael F. O’Connor, M.D., FCCM
Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care
Department of Anesthesia and Critical Care
Chief, Section of Critical Care
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Vivek Rao, M.D., Ph.D., FRCPS
Chief, Cardiovascular Surgery
Peter Munk Cardiac Centre
Toronto General Hospital
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Avery Tung, M.D., FCCM
Professor of Anesthesiology and Critical Care
Quality Chief for Anesthesia
Department of Anesthesia and Critical Care
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Liza M. Weavind, M.D.
Associate Professor of Anesthesia
Director, Critical Care Fellowship Program
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, Tennessee

Brian Wessman, M.D.
Co-Director
Critical Care Medicine Fellowship
Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology
and Emergency Medicine
Washington University School of Medicine
St. Louis, Missouri

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Continuing Medical Education (CME)
Activity Information

Activity Overview
The Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists 27th Annual Meeting seeks to optimize outcomes for critically ill patients and their families by providing updates and expert discussion on topics of interest to anesthesiologists practicing critical care and perioperative medicine through advancing knowledge, improving competence and enhancing performance of intensive care teams.

Target Audience
The SOCCA 27th Annual Meeting and Critical Care Update is designed for anesthesiologists in the clinical and laboratory setting who desire to improve development of anesthesiology teaching methods by engaging in an interchange of ideas as represented in this meeting.

Accreditation Statement
This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of the International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS) and the Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists (SOCCA). The IARS is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

American Medical Association (AMA)
Credit Designation Statement
The International Anesthesia Research Society designates this live activity for a maximum of 7 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Educational Objectives
As a result of participation in this CME activity, learners should be able to:
• Recognize the current state of emerging knowledge and practice patterns and assess the relevance for their professional practice;
• Incorporate new knowledge from advances in anesthesiology practice into their professional practice areas; and
• Recognize gaps in their knowledge, behavior, and patient outcomes that may result in a need for additional education and training.

Disclosure
The IARS complies with ACCME Essential Areas, Standards and Policies regarding industry support of CME Activities. The IARS has implemented policies and practices with respect to the planning, implementation and presentation of this activity to identify and resolve potential conflicts of interest for all persons in a position to control content.

Session Learner Objectives

What’s New in Management of Acute Pulmonary Hypertension in the ICU
• Recognize the different mechanism of acute pulmonary hypertension and its consequence on RV function.
• Develop an approach in the treatment of acute pulmonary hypertension in the ICU.

Role of Right Mechanical Heart Assist
• Recognize the risk factors for RV failure following LVAD implant.
• Review the management of RV failure.
• Evaluate the role of mechanical RV support.

Bedside Point of Care Ultrasound in Assessment of RV Function
• Recognize the pathophysiology of right ventricular failure.
• Recognize the common transthoracic views of the Right Ventricle.
• Integrate a comprehensive bedside Point of care US assessment.

Important Publications You Might Have Missed
• Identify key articles that influence medical care in critically ill patients.
• Describe the population, intervention, control group, and outcome for each study discussed.

Innovative Informatics Approaches to Improve Healthcare Delivery in the ICU
• Identify opportunities for improvement in current clinical workflows and their outcomes.
• Illustrate how to improve situational awareness and decision support with innovative informatics to impact ICU patient outcomes.
• Elucidate barriers to the use of technology to drive patient care.
• Address security concerns in the ICU with medical technology.

Tele-ICU: Optimizing Care Delivery in Under-Resourced ICUs
• Recognize the need for Tele-ICU services in the US.
• Discuss the outcome data related to Tele-ICU utilization.
• Identify what the future of Tele-ICU might look like.

The Future of Clinical Informatics in the ICU
• Recognize the existing and future electronic medical record infrastructure in critical care environments.
• Discuss lost data and the value that may exist in this data.
• Use these data systems to improve quality and conduct research.

Interactive Case Management
• List considerations for induction of anesthesia in unstable patients.
• Discuss current controversies in perioperative fluid management.
• Characterize risks in emergent blood product transfusion.
Program Schedule

Friday, May 16, 2014

6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration
7:30 - 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast - Exhibits Open
8:00 - 8:05 a.m. Welcome and Introduction
Carlee Clark, M.D.; Daryl Kor, M.D.
8:05 - 8:15 a.m. IARS Leadership Opening Remarks
Denise J. Wedel, M.D. - Board Chair

Session I - RV: The Forgotten Ventricle in the ICU
8:20 - 8:50 a.m. What's New in Management of Acute Pulmonary Hypertension in the ICU
Andre A. Denault, M.D.
8:55 - 9:25 a.m. Role of Right Mechanical Heart Assist
Vivek Rao, M.D., Ph.D., FRCPS
9:30 - 10:00 a.m. Bedside Point of Care Ultrasound in Assessment of RV Function
Massimiliano Meineri, M.D.
10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Break and Visit with Vendors

Session II - Celebrating Science
10:20 - 11:10 a.m. Important Publications You Might Have Missed
Vivek Moitra, M.D. - Moderator
Panelists:
Steven B. Greenberg, M.D.
Erin K. Hennessey, M.D.
Brian Wessman, M.D.
11:15 - 11:30 a.m. Young Investigator Award and Abstract Presentation
"Focused Echocardiography During Glucagon Administration To Diagnose Beta Blocker-induced Cardiomyopathy"
Andrew Young, M.D.
11:35 - 11:40 a.m. Introduction of ASA Representative
Aryeh Shander, M.D., FCCM
11:45 - 11:55 a.m. ASA Address
John P. Abenstein, M.D. – ASA President-Elect

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Lunch and Burchardi Award
Burchardi Award Recipient
Michael F. Heine, M.D.

Session III - Biomedical and Health Informatics in the ICU
1:00 - 1:20 p.m. Innovative Informatics Approaches to Improve Healthcare Delivery in the ICU
Lisa Weavind, M.D.
1:25 - 1:45 p.m. Tele-ICU: Optimizing Care Delivery in Under-Resourced ICUs
Ruben Azocar, M.D.
1:50 - 2:10 p.m. The Future of Clinical Informatics in the ICU
James Blum, M.D.
2:15 - 2:50 p.m. Moderated Poster Session
2:15 - 2:50 p.m. Break and Vendor Visits
2:55 - 3:25 p.m. Lifetime Achievement Award Presentation
“Laws and Axioms to Live By - or - Some Stuff I’ve Learned Along The Way”
Clifford S. Deutschman, M.S., M.D., MCCM

Session IV - Interactive Case Management
3:30 - 3:35 p.m. Introduction
Daniel R. Brown, M.D., Ph.D., FCCM - Moderator
Panelists:
Brenda G. Fahy, M.D., MCCM
Michael F. O’Connor, M.D., FCCM
Avery Tung, M.D., FCCM
4:55 - 5:00 pm. Closing Remarks
5:00 - 5:45 p.m. SOCCA Annual Business Meeting
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Resident/Fellow Program
5:45 - 7:00 p.m. Welcome Reception
Nominating Committee Candidate Announcement

The SOCCA Nominating Committee will present the following slate of candidates to the SOCCA membership at the Society’s Annual Membership Business Meeting on Friday, May 16, 2014 at the SOCCA 27th Annual Meeting and Critical Care Update at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montréal, Canada.

Voting will be done electronically in 2014 and will open on Friday, May 16. Information regarding the electronic voting will be provided to members prior to the Annual Meeting.

SOCCA members will vote to elect a President-Elect (2-year term), a Secretary (2-year term), a Treasurer (2-year term), and three (3) Board of Directors (3-year term). The terms will begin May 2014.

President-Elect: Avery Tung, M.D.
Secretary: Miguel A. Cobas, M.D.
Treasurer: Daniel R. Brown, M.D., Ph.D., FCCM
Board of Directors: Benjamin A. Kohl, M.D., FCCM
Stephen D. Surgenor, M.D.
Michael H. Wall, M.D., FCCM
Liza Weavind, MBBCh, FCCM

Meet your International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS) Team

Contact your SOCCA team for any questions or assistance needed!

The SOCCA Membership Team:
Bonnie Akimoto and Erik Rosales may be reached at SOCQA@iars.org

The SOCCA Staff Liaison:
Julie McGrath may be reached at SOCCAmmeetings@iars.org

Update your address book with the new SOCCA headquarters contact information:

Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists (SOCCA)
44 Montgomery St., Suite 1605 | San Francisco, CA 94104-4703
Phone: (415) 296-6952 | Fax: (415) 296-6901
www.SOCCA.org
A Review of Current and Novel Antiplatelet Agents

Antplatelet agents are widely used in the prevention and treatment of thrombotic diseases. There are multiple antiplatelet agents in current clinical usage and development, and knowledge of each one’s indications and potential side effects are necessary for intensivists caring for the patients on these medications.

Antiplatelet drugs are classified primarily according to the molecular mechanism through which they have their pharmacologic effect, and this article will address the indications, pharmacology, and potential limitations of the agents within each category.

**COX-1 INHIBITORS: Drugs in this class:**

Aspirin

**Indication:**

The secondary prevention of atherosclerotic disease

**Mechanism of Action:**

Aspirin works by inhibiting the prostaglandin-producing enzyme cyclooxygenase, which can affect inflammation, fever, protection of gastric mucosa, regulation of renal function and platelet aggregation. The platelet prostaglandin thromboxane A2 increases expression of fibrinogen receptors on platelet membranes and facilitates fibrin cross-links between platelets to form a platelet plug. COX-1 inhibition by aspirin is irreversible and regular low doses lead to more than 95% suppression of thromboxane A2 production.

**Limitations of COX-1 Inhibitors:**

1. Gastrointestinal bleeding or intolerance.
2. There are patients who seem to have resistance to aspirin, and recurrent vascular events are not infrequent in patients on chronic aspirin therapy, at a rate of 6-8% per year. Whereas “aspirin resistance” is thought to be affected by compliance, cigarette smoking, hyperlipidemia, and diabetes, the exact mechanism is a focus of ongoing research, especially with respect to the need for dual or multiple antiplatelet therapy.

**ADP RECEPTOR ANTAGONISTS: Drugs in this class:**

Ticlopidine (Ticlid), clopidogrel (Plavix) and prasugrel (Effient) are the current agents used in this class.

**Indication:**

MI, stroke/TIA or symptomatic peripheral arterial disease, usually used in conjunction with aspirin

**Mechanism of Action:**

Thienopyridines inhibit adenosine diphosphate (ADP)-dependent platelet function by irreversible modification of the platelet P2Y<sub>12</sub> receptor. Drug effects persist for the life of the platelet. Short-lived active metabolites are generated from the orally administered prodrug via cytochrome P<sub>450</sub>. Due to the unfavorable side effect profile of ticlopidine (diarrhea, neutropenia and aplastic anemia), clopidogrel has become the preferred thienopyridine. Important differences in metabolism and efficacy exist between clopidogrel and prasugrel.

Clopidogrel, a second-generation thienopyridine, is metabolized by cytochrome P<sub>450</sub> from prodrug to active form in a two-step process. Genetic variability in metabolism exists, with poor metabolizers exhibiting higher rates of cardiovascular events. Genetic testing for cytochrome P<sub>450</sub> 2C19 (CYP2C19) polymorphisms can identify patients at increased risk for treatment failure and should be considered prior to initiating therapy in patients at high risk for poor outcomes.

Prasugrel, a third-generation Thienopyridine, requires a single-step cytochrome-dependent metabolism from prodrug to active form. Unlike clopidogrel, common P<sub>450</sub> genetic variants do not significantly affect active drug levels. Onset of action is faster than clopidogrel.

Prasugrel has been shown to generate an active metabolite more efficiently than clopidogrel, leading to higher levels of platelet inhibition. The PRINCIPLE-TIMI 44 trial demonstrated that prasugrel achieved superior platelet inhibition when compared to high-dose clopidogrel. In the TRITON-TIMI 38 trial, prasugrel reduced the composite endpoint of death, nonfatal MI and nonfatal stroke by 20% in comparison to clopidogrel. However, rates of major hemorrhage were higher by 32% in the prasugrel group compared to the clopidogrel group. Due to the higher bleeding risk, prasugrel is recommended for those patients who are poor metabolizers of clopidogrel and in those patients at lower risk for bleeding complications.

**Limitations of Thienopyridines:**

1. The metabolism of clopidogrel, which is a prodrug requiring two-step activation involving several hepatic cytochrome P<sub>450</sub> isoenzymes for conversion to the active metabolite. This results in a delayed onset of action (6-8 hours after a 300mg loading dose) and potentially increases the risk of ischemic events.
2. Irreversible binding to P2Y<sub>12</sub> receptors, leading to a gradual recovery of platelet function after drug withdrawal. In the

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CURE study, among patients undergoing coronary artery bypass graft, bleeding tended to be more common if CABG was performed within five days of clopidogrel administration, as evidenced by chest tube output and blood product administration.12

3. The broad interindividual variability in levels of platelet inhibition achieved with clopidogrel with reports showing that about 30% of patients experience clopidogrel “nonresponsiveness” despite appropriate dosing.25

REVERSIBLE ADP-RECEPTOR ANTAGONISTS:

Drugs in this class:

Ticagrelor (Brilinta, oral agent), cangrelor (intravenous agent) and elinogrel (both intravenous and oral) are associated with rapid onset and offset of platelet inhibition. Of these, only ticagrelor is approved for clinical use.25

Indication:

Stable coronary artery disease for prevention of ischemic events or prevention of stroke or death from vascular causes

Mechanism of Action:

Ticagrelor belongs to the class of drugs termed cycloptenyl-triazolo-pyrimidines. Like the thienopyridines, ticagrelor blocks the platelet P2Y12 receptor to inhibit the prothrombotic effects of ADP.25 Ticagrelor binds reversibly to P2Y12 and does not require metabolic activation. It needs only 1.5-3.0 hours to reach peak plasma levels, allowing a rapid antiplatelet effect.26,27 Ticagrelor’s half-life is approximately 12 hours and its antiplatelet effect is low at 48 hours after the last dose.28 It has a faster onset than clopidogrel and does not require conversion from a prodrug, which means there is less variability in patient responsiveness.25

Limitations of Reversible ADP-receptor antagonists:

1. Ticagrelor requires twice-daily dosing, raising concerns with compliance
2. Higher incidence of hemorrhagic stroke and GI bleeding with ticagrelor compared with clopidogrel is also concerning and is a definite limitation of its use.35

THROMBIN RECEPTOR ANTAGONISTS:

Thrombin interacts with two platelet receptors called PAR-1 and PAR-4. Protease-activated receptor 1 is the predominant receptor in humans and has a higher affinity for thrombin compared with PAR-4.36 Two agents against PAR-1 are currently under investigation. Vorapaxar is a potent oral thrombin receptor antagonist with a half-life of 126-269 hours that inhibits platelet function for up to 4 weeks after discontinuation.37,38 Two ongoing phase 3 trials are underway with vorapaxar and a second oral agent, atopaxar, has recently completed phase 2 evaluation.41

GLYCOPROTEIN IIb/IIIa INHIBITORS:

Drugs in this class:

Abciximab (Reopro), eptifibatide (Integrilin) and tirofiban (Aggrastat).

Indication:

Randomized clinical trials have demonstrated that adjunctive therapy with GP IIb/IIIa antagonists decrease the combined endpoint of death, myocardial infarction and target vessel revascularization after PCI.30,31

This class of antiplatelet agents is associated with greatest clinical benefit in the following scenarios:

1. Conditions associated with a high likelihood of intracoronary thrombosis, such as ST-elevation and non-ST-elevation MI where an invasive strategy is planned.
2. When the anticoagulant is heparin rather than a direct-thrombin inhibitor.
3. When the patient has not been treated before PCI with a P2Y12 antagonist.
4. In unstable ACS patients who require transfer to a PCI center.
5. To reduce the risk of stent thrombosis in a patient with ST-elevation MI (especially when there is not adequate pretreatment with a P2Y12 antagonist).

Mechanism of Action:

Abciximab is a monoclonal antibody that displays a rapid on-rate, binding to platelets in less than 1 min.46 The dissociation (off-rate) of abciximab is measured in hours.47 Abciximab has the greatest affinity for GP IIb/IIIa among the drugs in this class.47 Eptifibatide and tirofiban are small molecules that exhibit a longer half-life compared with abciximab, 2.5 h and 2h, respectively.48 Another key difference is the off-rate of eptifibatide and tirofiban which is 10-15 seconds compared with hours for abciximab.49

Limitations of Glycoprotein IIb/IIIa inhibitors:

Oral GP IIb/IIIa inhibitors have been studied but the results have been disappointing. Because of an increased risk of death in those treated with oral agents, further development was abandoned.57

PHOSPHODIESTERASE INHIBITORS:

Drugs in this class:

Cilostazol (Pletal) and dipyridamole (Perpentine) are two commonly used agents in this class.58,59 The combination drug of dipyridamole and aspirin is sold under the trade name of Aggrenox.

Indication:

Intermittent claudication is a frequent consequence of peripheral arterial disease with a prevalence of 2-9% in individuals greater than 50 years.59 Treatment options for this disease

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are limited, with surgical intervention reserved for severe or progressive cases.60
Pharmacotherapy is reserved for patients resistant to risk factor modification, exercise and diet changes.60

Mechanism of Action:
The phosphodiesterase inhibitors function as both vasodilators and antiplatelet drugs. Cilostazol is a reversible type III phosphodiesterase inhibitor with vasodilator and antiplatelet effects. The inhibition of PDE-III by cilostazol results in a rise in intracellular cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) levels in PDE-III-rich cells such as platelets, vascular smooth muscle cells, endothelial cells and cardiocytes.61 Cilostazol also inhibits adenosine uptake into cells, leading to an elevation of interstitial and circulating adenosine levels. By elevating cAMP levels and blocking calcium ion release, cilostazol inhibits contraction of smooth muscle cells and produces non-hemogenous vasodilation, especially in the femoral arteries.62 Disease progression might be slowed through its antiproliferative effect on vascular smooth muscle.63 Up to 12 weeks of therapy may be required before symptoms improve.

The phosphodiesterase inhibitor dipyridamole had previously been used as a coronary vasodilator and was later developed as a platelet inhibitor acting via the ADP mechanism, showing improved efficacy in conjunction with aspirin in cerebrovascular disease.65,66

Limitations of Phosphodiesterase inhibitors:
1. Cilostazol is contraindicated in patients with heart failure of any severity due to theoretical concerns related to its mechanism of action and classification as a phosphodiesterase inhibitor.59
2. Cilostazol is metabolized extensively by the cytochrome isoenzymes CYP3A4 and CYP2C19. When known inhibitors of these isoenzymes (erythromycin, diltiazem, fluconazole, etc.) are coadministered with cilostazol, supratherapeutic levels have been observed.64

Summary:
In summary, a multitude of clinical conditions are currently treated with antiplatelet therapy. Novel drug classes that target unique aspects of platelet aggregation are introduced here as well as newer generation drugs in familiar classes. For the peri- and operative clinician, an understanding of the pharmacology and indications for each agent is crucial.

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