

Effect of topical Vancomycin on consolidation of sternum surgical fracture in open-heart surgery

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The physiological process of sternum surgical fracture consolidation in patients undergoing cardiac surgery could be prolonged by the invasion of gram-positive saprophytic bacteria which perpetuates the local inflammatory process despite the standardized aseptic and antiseptic measures in cardiac surgery. In this regard, the topical application of Vancomycin can exert a positive effect and prevent the perpetuation of the local inflammatory process by the elimination of these bacteria which in turn reduces bone consolidation time. The purpose of the current study was to determine the effect of topical Vancomycin on sternum surgical fracture consolidation in patients undergoing to open-heart surgery.

Materials and Methods: Patients who underwent open heart surgery were assigned into groups receiving the topical application of bone wax or Vancomycin mass in the spongy tissue exposed by surgical sternotomy, prior to sternal closure. The bone consolidation processes were assessed by two expert radiologists with simple chest computed tomography (CT) in the postoperative period (4, 8, and 12 weeks).

Results: The study was conducted on 55 patients in Vancomycin (n=33) and bone wax group (n=19). The computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan revealed a higher number of patients with early bone consolidation (Medullar and bone continuity, and callus bone) in Vancomycin group, as compared to bone wax group (p values between 0.004-0.02 at 4 weeks and 0.01-0.06 at 8 weeks). However, no difference was observed at 12 weeks (P=0.09-0.11). Moreover, The magnitude effect of topical Vancomycin was high (>90%) at 3, 8, and 12 weeks of follow up, compared to the patients who received bone wax (<90%).

Conclusion: The topical Vancomycin application had a positive effect on sternal surgical fracture and promotes an early bone consolidation in patients undergoing open-heart surgery.

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Introduction:

Surgical sternum fracture is essential for the treatment of anterior mediastinum boarding in open-heart surgery which

usually heals at least in 12 weeks. During this time patients are at great risk of developing dehiscence, local infection, osteomyelitis, and mediastinitis. An

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inflammatory reaction is involved after any fracture during the process of bone consolidation which is usually self-limited in the absence of the factors that prolong inflammatory conditions [1,2].

Some authors reported the invasion of deep tissues of mediastinum by gram-positive bacteria, such as saprophytic flora resulting from sternotomy, tissue manipulation, and bone trauma during closure sternotomy despite standardized aseptic and antiseptic measures in cardiac surgery, however despite of this measures considered as gold standard, this bacterial invasion promotes an inflammatory stage which prolongs bone consolidation in the sternum [3-6].

No adverse event was reported in various clinical trials regarding topical Vancomycin. On the contrary, Vancomycin was found to reduce the incidence of local infection by up to 45% which may be attributed to the elimination of residual gram-positive bacteria in the surgical incision [7]. Accordingly, bacterial elimination in the surgical fracture of sternum could promote a faster evolution of the primary bone consolidation and reduce the risks of complications related to surgical sternotomy. The current study reported the result of a clinical trial in which Vancomycin was applied topically to sternotomy surgery at the end of surgical procedure in patients undergoing open-heart surgery to identify the effect of topical Vancomycin in the speed of sternal consolidation after open heart surgery.

Materials and Method

This was a randomized blind clinical trial conducted from January 2018 to June 2019. The study as approved by the National Medic Center " 20 de Noviembre" ISSSTE, Mexico city. Research Ethics Committee with number register 012.2018. All patients signed informed consent and accepted to undergo -heart surgery performed in Cardiology and Cardiothoracic Surgery Departments. The patient's randomization was made using the identification number of clinical records to assign them to each group: 1) Case group: patients with odd end number that received 1 gr. of topical Vancomycin. 2) Control group: patients with even end number that received topical bone

wax. The sample size was calculated using the recommendation made by Cohen J [8], whose proposes a high probability to reach a normality distribution of data with at less 30 subjects. Patients prone to surgical re-exploration due to excessive bleeding were eliminated from the study.

The standardized preoperative protocol was covered by all patients, including septic focus eradications, blood biometrics, blood chemistry, respiratory function tests, liver function tests, general urine tests, chest radiographs, electrocardiogram, serological tests (HIV, hepatitis, HPV, CMV, and Chagas disease), hormonal thyroid and parathyroid profile.

Once the patients were prepared for surgery in the operating room, the heart electric activity was continuously monitored by DII and V5 ECG, arterial oxyhemoglobin saturation was determined by pulse oximetry, and heart rate and blood pressure were obtained with a catheter introduced into the left radial artery connected to an arterial pressure transducer. Under general anesthesia, a median sternotomy was performed to gain access to the anterior mediastinum. Thereafter, the pericardium was marsupialized using silk suture to obtain access to the heart. Systemic anticoagulation was carried out with Sodic heparin (Hep-Tec®) at 100 U/kg and, and one cannula was then inserted in the ascending aorta and another one in the inferior and/or superior vena cava. The patient was weaned from extracorporeal bypass and protamine was administered to revert anticoagulation. Additionally, the sternotomy closure was made with stainless steel wire and muscle planes with poliglactina 910 (Vicryl®) suture in the conventional way.

Experimental Procedure

Sternotomy closure was performed with sterile spatula bone wax (Control group) or Vancomycin mass (case group) on the spongy matrix of the sternum, as depicted in Figure 1. The topical Vancomycin was prepared by mixing 1 mg powdered Vancomycin with a physiologic solution until reaching a solid mass and the bone wax Atramat® 2.5 gr.

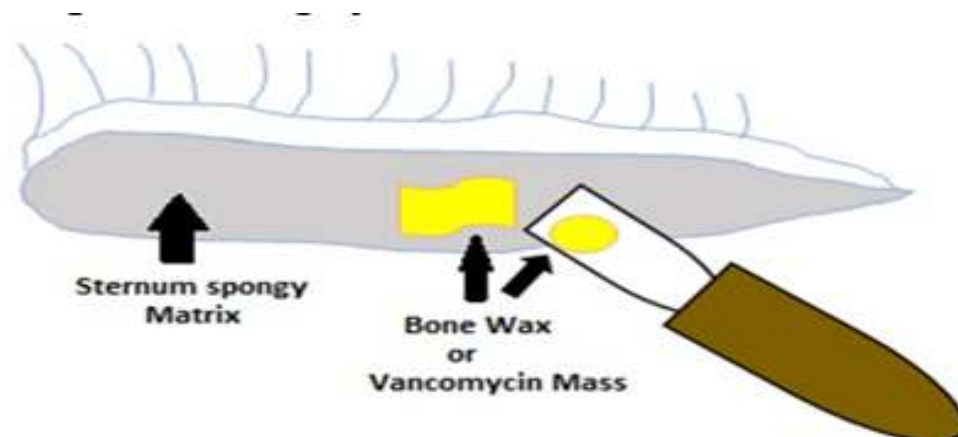


Figure1: Vancomycin paste and bone wax application technique. From Original Drawing by Machuca Maldonado LA et al.

Basal and follow up studies

To see osteoporotic status in each patient as possible bias in the process of bone consolidation, bone densitometry was performed before surgical procedure using Hologic QDR 4500 Elite Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DXA) for the determination of mineral concentration (gr) and mineralized bone density (gr / cm³) in the hip and lumbar spine (L1-L4).

The T score and Z scale were identified according to reference values in the Mestizo-Mexican population. At 4, 8 and 12 weeks after surgical procedure, a chest computerized tomography (CT) scan was performed using Siemens CT Scanner and Syngo CT 2006A multislice software. (Figure 2).

The axial cut images were evaluated every 5 mm by an expert radiologist and a radiologist cardiologist in PACs (Picture Archiving and communication system) and KDS (Kanteron Systems version 3.1b2) Osirix Team 2004-2007. The intra and inter-observer variability was assessed with independent images prior to the recruitment, indicating variability of 5 and 8%, respectively.

It is worthy to mention that the radiologists were blinded to the assessment

of TC images concerning bone wax or Vancomycin mass applied in each group.

Results

The current study was conducted on 52 patients who were assigned into two groups of case (n=33) and control (n=19), the remain patients (n = 11) in this group were eliminated by volume of bleeding that required surgical exploration. The preoperative, surgical and postoperative variables did not show significant differences, as indicated in in Table 1.

The postoperative CAT assessment showed significant higher number patients with early bone consolidation (Medullar and bone continuity, and callus bone) to 4 and 8 weeks in Vancomycin group, compared with bone wax group (p values between 0.004-0.02 at 4 weeks and 0.01-0.06 at 8 weeks). However, no difference was detected after 12 weeks (p value between 0.09-0.11), as indicated in Table 2.

In the Figure 2, showed the CAT images comparison between a case of the vancomycin group and another case of the bone wax group at 4, 8 and 12 postoperative weeks. The magnitude effect of topical Vancomycin was high at 4, 8 and 12 weeks than bone wax on postoperative bone consolidation, as indicated in Table 3.

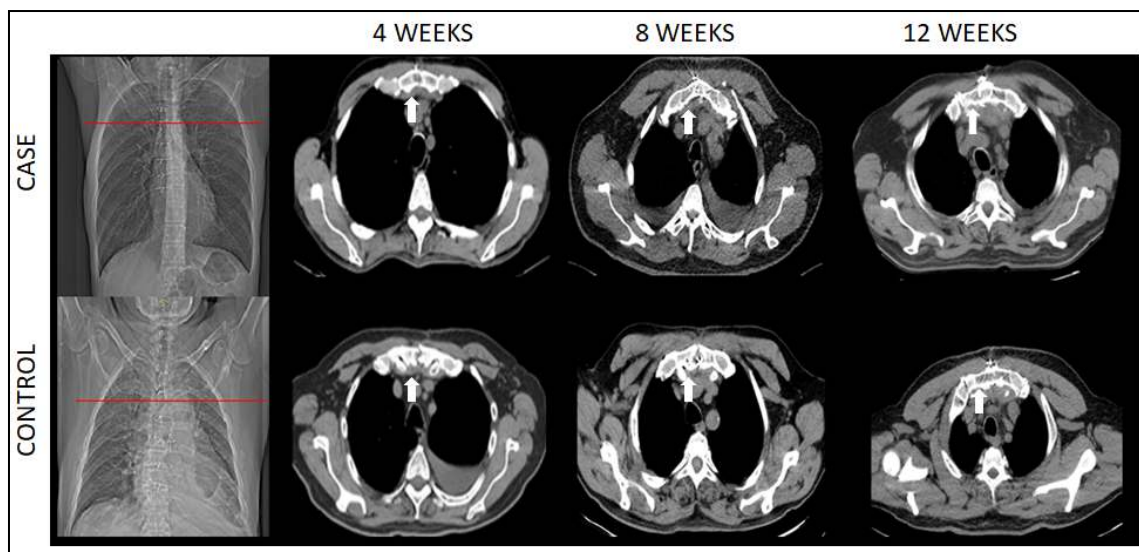


Figure 2: From computed axial tomography of one patient from cases group and other from control group. Axial Tomographic images show medullar and bone continuity at 4 and 8 weeks in case above, compared with control (Below) only with medullar continuity at 8 weeks; at 12 weeks callus bone was present in patients of both groups.

Table 1. Demographic, surgical and postoperative variables

	Vancomycin group	Bone wax group	p-Value
Demographic variables			
Age (years)	61±9	63±4	0.55
Weight (kg)	74±14	75±10	0.67
Index Body Mass	27±3	28±2	0.82
Diabetes Mellitus (n / %) *	22/66	13/68	0.45
Hypertensión (n/ %) *	17/51	9/47	0.56
Dyslipidemia (n / %) *	20/60	11/57	0.34
Bone densitometry (gr/cm2)	11.8±6.7	13.6±2.4	0.27
Alkaline phosphatase (UI/l)	92.6±5.3	78.6±4	0.55
Aspartate Aminotransferasa (IU/l)	76.3±16.3	26.5±6.8	0.47
Alanin Aminotransferase (IU/l)	54±10	28±5.4	0.56
Ureic Nitrogen (mg/dl)	17.6±8.2	22.6±8.8	0.21
Creatinine (mg/dl)	0.9±0.05	0.9±0.03	0.93
Surgical variables			
Surgical time (min)	237±64	243±47	0.80
Extracorporeal Bypass time (min)	70±4	89±6	0.40
Aorta clamping time (min)	44± 4	62±2	0.10
Postoperative Variables			
Hospital estancia (days)	7±2	9±2	0.22
Sternal dehiscence (n)	0	0	-
Sternal Instability (n)	0	0	-
Surgical wound infection (n)	0	0	-
Adverse events (n)	0	0	-

P value was calculated with Student's t-test and Chi-squared test*

Table 2. Postoperative bone consolidation stages evaluated with images of Computed axial tomography

	Vancomycin group (n)	Bone wax group (n)	p-value
Post-Surgical 4 weeks			
Medullar continuity	31	12	0.004
Bone continuity	30	13	0.02
Bone callus	26	3	0.001
Post-Surgical 8 weeks			
Medullar continuity	33	16	0.01
Bone continuity	33	16	0.01
Bone callus	32	17	0.05
Post-Surgical 12 weeks			
Medullar continuity	33	19	0.09
Bone continuity	33	19	0.10
Bone callus	33	19	0.11

P value was calculated with Chi-squared test.

Table 3. Effect Size of Vancomycin and bone wax on postoperative bone consolidation of sternotomy by Computed Axial Tomography

	Vancomycin group (%)	Bone wax group (%)	p-value
Post-Surgical 4 weeks			
Medullar continuity	91	65	0.001
Bone continuity	91	67	0.001
Bone callus	93	66	0.001
Post-Surgical 8 weeks			
Medullar continuity	95	82	0.01
Bone continuity	95	81	0.01
Bone callus	96	93	0.05
Post-Surgical 12 weeks			
Medullar continuity	98	95	0.06
Bone continuity	98	95	0.06
Bone callus	98	97	0.09

Effect Size (d) was calculated using Cohen Delta test, p value was obtained with Chi-squared test.

Discussion

The sternal surgical fracture healing is an event requiring sequenced physiological processes which must take place to avoid postoperative complications in open-heart surgery. These processes are usually carried out smoothly for at least 12 weeks. However, as evidenced by the literature, surgical fracture healing may be delayed by microbial contamination in the sternal surgical wound that leads to a prolonged inflammatory immune phenomenon. The efficiency of

topical Vancomycin (30 mg) in the reduction of postoperative infections has been suggested by several studies. This efficiency can be attributed to the elimination of microorganisms that invade the sternal surgical wound despite the standardized aseptic and antiseptic processes in open heart surgery [7, 9, 10]. Based on the results of the present study, apart from preventing the development of a local infectious process, Vancomycin

promotes conditions that allow natural healing of sternal surgical fracture at a faster rate. In this regard, bone and medullar continuity, as well as, bone callus was observed within 4 and 8 weeks in more patients in Vancomycin group, compared to the patients who received conventional bone wax (p values between 0.004-0.02 at 4 weeks and 0.01-0.06 at 8 weeks). These results strongly suggest that the elimination of an antigenic source that prolongs the local inflammatory process allows for a physiological process of tissue reconstitution in less time.

Contrary to above mentioned, several studies have reported that bone wax, which is used in a standardized way to perform hemostasis in sternum spongy bone, is a non-absorbable material that keeps the wound environment moist which permits microorganisms lodged during the surgical procedure to survive. Moreover, surgical trauma and extracorporeal bypass used for open-heart surgical procedures were reported to have an adverse effect on the organism's immune response. Consequently, they can alter the immuno-modulatory defense mechanisms, allowing the invasion and survival of gram-positive microorganisms from saprophytic flora usually observed in local infections [11-14].

In cardiac surgery, major risk factors of sternal surgical fracture healing include obesity and osteoporosis status in each patient, extracorporeal bypass circulation time, aortic clamping time, and preoperative levels of hepatic enzymes (AST, ALT, and TGO) [11-20]. All these imply the possibility of modifying the positive effect of topical Vancomycin on reducing the time needed for postoperative surgical sternal fracture healing. However, neither preoperative demographic nor metabolic conditions showed significant differences between groups and topical vancomycin showed a marked effect on the early healing within the first 8 postoperative weeks processes of bone reconstitution, showing a very high magnitude effect (> 90%), compared to the effect size observed in patients who received conventional bone wax (<90%).

Strengths and limitations

The study shows the additional utility of topical vancomycin that in addition to its antimicrobial effect, contributes with conditions that promote bone consolidation in a shorter time, representing an advantage for the patient which undergoing open heart surgery, reducing the likelihood postoperative complications related to sternotomy.

No cultures of the sternotomy edges were performed to identify the residual presence of bacterial contamination; however, the findings showed a process of bone consolidation in less time, suggests other possible effects of vancomycin on cellular processes that should be studied in future research.

Conclusion

The topical Vancomycin application had a positive effect on sternal surgical fracture and promotes an early bone consolidation in patients undergoing open heart surgery.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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