**Effects of Clonidine on Withdrawal from Long Term Dexmedetomidine in the Pediatric Patient**

Allison B. Lardieri, PharmD; Nicholas Fusco, PharmD, BCPSc; Shari Simone, DNP, CPNP-AC, FCCMSc; Jill A. Morgan, PharmD, BCPSc; L. Kyle Walker, MD, FCCMSc; Kristine A. Parbuoni, PharmD, BCPSc

1. University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science; 2. University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics; 3. University of Maryland Medical Center, Department of Pharmacy

**BACKGROUND**

- Use of dexmedetomidine is increasing in pediatric critical care, cardiac critical care, and anesthesia.
- Favorable adverse effect profile
- Reduction in opioid and benzodiazepine use
- Potential for reduction in mechanical ventilation days
- Provided more effective sedation than midazolam
- Adult studies of 24-hour infusions have shown minimal rebound hypertension and tachycardia after abrupt discontinuation.
- Limited studies have evaluated dexmedetomidine use longer than 4-5 days in the pediatric population.
- Upon discontinuation of long term dexmedetomidine, pediatric patients have experienced withdrawal symptoms such as: agitation, rebound hypertension, and rebound tachycardia.
- Due to similar mechanisms of action, clonidine is theorized to help reduce withdrawal from long term dexmedetomidine.
- The Withdrawal Assessment Tool-1 (WAT-1) is a validated tool to objectively monitor opioid and benzodiazepine withdrawal symptoms in pediatric patients.

**OBJECTIVES**

**Primary Objective:**
To compare Withdrawal Assessment Tool-1 (WAT-1) scores among patients on clonidine to those not on clonidine, while being weaned from long term dexmedetomidine (≤5 days).

**Secondary objective:**
To describe the withdrawal symptoms experienced after long term dexmedetomidine use (≤5 days).

**STUDY DESIGN & METHODS**

- Single center, retrospective chart analysis including patients admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU): Approved by University of Maryland School of Medicine IRB

**Primary Outcome:**
Withdrawal

**Secondary Outcome:**
WAT-1. Number of scores ≥3 and average score during the 24 hours post wean

**Selected Exclusion Criteria:**
- Cyanotic heart disease, single ventricle, primary pulmonary hypertension, ventillator dependent on PICU admission, neuromuscular respiratory failure, pain managed on PCA or epidural catheter, transferred from outside ICU where sedatives have already been administered for >24 hours

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clonidine (N = 12)</th>
<th>No Clonidine (N = 8)</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age, years, range</td>
<td>1.0 (0.85 – 1.37)</td>
<td>1.0 (0.85 – 1.30)</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight, kg, range</td>
<td>9.8 (8.5 – 12.3)</td>
<td>9.8 (8.5 – 12.3)</td>
<td>0.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOS (days), range</td>
<td>19.9 (16.0 – 28.7)</td>
<td>19.9 (16.0 – 28.7)</td>
<td>0.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICU LOS (days), range</td>
<td>12.9 (9.8 – 20.3)</td>
<td>12.9 (9.8 – 20.3)</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilator Days, range</td>
<td>7.5 (6.5 – 14.4)</td>
<td>7.5 (6.5 – 14.4)</td>
<td>0.115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Dexmedetomidine Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of events = 20</th>
<th>Clonidine (N = 12)</th>
<th>No Clonidine (N = 8)</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Dex. (hours), median (IQR)</td>
<td>241.8 (185 – 406.3)</td>
<td>134.5 (117 – 144)</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Dose, mcg/kg median (IQR)</td>
<td>232.7 (158.3 – 336.1)</td>
<td>126.1 (102.1 – 157.5)</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Dose, mcg/kg/hour (range)</td>
<td>1.0 (0.53 – 1.81)</td>
<td>1.0 (0.42 – 1.73)</td>
<td>0.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Dose, mcg/kg/hour</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Clonidine Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N = 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transdermal formulation, %</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dose at Initiation (mcg/kg/day), mean (range)</td>
<td>9.0 (2.9 – 18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day No. of dexmedetomidine infusion when clonidine was initiated, mean (range)</td>
<td>7 (5-9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Patients received clonidine when on dexmedetomidine for longer duration.
- Patients who received clonidine trended towards receiving fewer extended WAT scores compared to the no clonidine group.
- Significant tachycardia after dexmedetomidine wean was observed in the no clonidine group.
- Including only patients with respiratory failure may limit generalizability of study.
- Need larger sample size to reach power.
- Overall, clonidine may be helpful in reducing withdrawal symptoms associated with weaning of long term dexmedetomidine in pediatric patients.

**REFERENCES**