

PATIENT CASE REPORT: PREMATURE INFANT WEIGHING 393 G, ANESTHETIZED AND VENTILATED WITH FLOW-i

In pediatric anesthesia, while caring for patient ranges from the tiny newborn up to the obese teenager, a wide variety of equipment in different sizes is required. In regard to the anesthesia machine it is important to have access to “a system capable of delivering even small volumes while supplying with precision inhalation gases” (Lönngqvist).

Case report

A 39-year-old woman became pregnant with twins after in-vitro-fertilisation. The pregnancy was difficult: The mother-to-be needed a cerclage (week 18), was inpatient for suspicion of amniotic infection syndrome (week 20) and received steroids for lung maturation (week 23). One of the babies died in utero in week 23 with trisomy 18. After worsening of the cardiogram (CTG) with falling heart rates, the decision was made for a cesarean section at the gestational age of 23 weeks + 3 days. The delivered baby was an extremely immature, cyanotic, floppy, and small-for-date preterm girl, weighing 355 g. She required resuscitation with intubation following positive pressure mask-ventilation. After stabilization of vital parameters, sedation with Midazolam and Nalbuphine was started and the baby was transferred to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Further examination revealed an anal atresia with a fistula. Coexisting anomalies could not be found in the remaining organ screening. The fistula could be probed with a Fr/CH 4 size gastric tube; there was meconium and from day 7 onwards first non-meconical stool deposits, so surgery was not a matter of discussion at this time. After 4 days on catecholamines the baby was stable with hemodynamic parameters. Surfactant

was applied in summary 3 times, she received antibiotics, resulting in a stable pulmonary and ventilatory situation. Packed red cells were transfused. Repeated cranial sonographies did not show any intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH). Enteral feeding was done very cautiously, but was possible.



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Laboratory examination	2 nd day	3 rd day	7 th day	10 th day	11 th day
Leucocytes (G/l)	17.85	34.97	15.2	29.5	34.63
Hemoglobine (g/dl)	12.9	13.0	13.8	14.1	13.1
Thrombocytes (G/l)	209	153	101	156	200
CRP (mg/l)	<0.6	<0.6		<0.6	<0.6
Respiratory situation					
FiO ₂		0.23 – 0.4			>0.4
PIP (mbar)		18			24

Table 1. PIP: peak inspiratory pressure

On day 11 the general condition worsened considerably with clinical and radiological signs of an ileus: it was possible to probe the fistula with Fr/CH 6–8, however, the baby did not deposit any more feces. The clinical investigation showed a raised and stretched abdomen which was sensitive for touch, and spastic intestinal convolutions could also be observed. In the abdominal X-ray a massively extended loop in the right lower abdomen was seen, free intra-abdominal air or an outflow of contrast media could not be excluded. The laboratory examination showed increasing leucocyte values, the remaining parameters were mostly unremarkable. The respiratory situation got worse: to secure oxygenation the inspired oxygen fraction had to be raised constantly to more than 0.4. To achieve adequate gas exchange the peak inspiratory pressure had to be increased to 22–24 mbar (Table 1).



Fig. 1

After taking everything into consideration, the decision was made for urgent explorative laparotomy under suspicion of mechanical obstruction or intestinal perforation.

The anesthesiological assessment revealed the before mentioned medical history. The family history did not suggest any malignant hyperthermia susceptibility. The patient was

hemodynamically stable without any circulatory support, an actual cranial sonography did not show any intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH), she was intubated and ventilated under sedation with Midazolam and morphine and a preoperative antibiotic treatment with Meropenem and Teicoplanin had already been started.

Her weight at the day of surgery was 393 g. She was intubated with an endotracheal tube size 2, had one intravenous line (i.v) G 26, a gastric tube Fr/CH 4. She received additionally two peripherally inserted i.v. lines – one of them was used postoperatively to insert a central venous line (G27) – and an urinary catheter Fr/CH 4. The temperature was taken from the skin; to warm the infant, a convective air warming blanket was used (Figure 1).

The intraoperative situs showed a narrow anal fistula to be the cause of the ileus. Fortunately there weren't any signs of necrotizing enterocolitis. The colon was relieved, stool and air sucked and an ileostomy was made. Also a large meckel-diverticulum was found and removed.

A balanced anesthesia with Sevoflurane (et vol% 1.8–3), Fentanyl (bolus 3.8 µg/kg; 2.5 µg/kg/h) and S-Ketamine (bolus 1.5 mg/kg; 1.5 mg/kg/h) was used without any muscle relaxants. The baby was given a glucose infusion intraoperatively, corresponding to 0.7 mg glucose/kg/min, with blood glucose values within the normal range (92–97 mg/dl).

The fluid and volume management consisted of crystalloids as glucose and isotonic solutions; as colloids she received fresh frozen plasma and packed red cells. In summary it was an equivalent of 20 ml per kilogram and hour for every of the 3 hour lasting operation (with Na 138–144 mmol/l; Hb 11.4–12.7 g/dl).

	PIP (mbar)	PEEP (mbar)	MV (l/min)	RR (/min)	TV (ml)	FiO ₂	pH	p _{cap} O ₂ (mmHg)	p _{cap} CO ₂ (mmHg)	HCO ₃ ⁻ (mmol/l)	BE (mmol/l)	etCO ₂ (mmHg)
Intensive care resp	22	4	0.08	28	2.9	0.35	7.4	30	47	27.1	4.2	n.m.
FLOW-i (PCV)	14	5	0.07	24	3	0.31	7.35	48.9	46	26	0.4	34

Table 2BE: base excess. cap: capillary. etCO₂: endtidal CO₂. MV: minute volume. n.m.: not measured. PEEP: positive end expiratory pressure. PIP: peak inspiratory pressure. PCV: pressure controlled ventilation. RR: respiratory rate. TV: tidal volume.

The girl was stable throughout the operation with her vital parameters: heart rate about 110–130 per minute, which was about 20 % below her non-anesthetised values. The blood pressure was within the normal range for her age (mean arterial pressure 25–46 mmHg). There was urinary production in an adequate way (3.6 ml/kg/h). Oxygenation was not a problem (SO₂ 91–95 %) with low inspired oxygen fraction (FiO₂ 0.25–0.31). Temperature was acceptable intra-operatively (36–37.8 °C).

The respiratory course was surprisingly simple without any problems, neither with the girl's lungs nor the machine and disturbing alarms. On the contrary: the intensity of the respirator settings adopted from the intensive care respirator could be reduced before skin incision and opening the abdominal wall (Table 2).

The measurement of even the smallest breath volumes was very reliable and reproducible throughout the operation while observing adequate chest movements. With minimal leakage from the endotracheal tube there was a rather good correlation between end tidal (et) and capillary (cap) CO₂ values as shown in Table 3.

	50 min after taking over	150 min after taking over	280 min after taking over
PIP (mbar)	14	14	14
PEEP (mbar)	5	5	5
MV (l/min)	0.1	0.07	0.07
TV (ml)	4	3	3
FiO ₂	0.31	0.29	0.28
etCO ₂ (mmHg)	34	44	43
p _{cap} CO ₂ (mmHg)	48	46.5	50.3
pH	7.35	7.35	7.27
p _{cap} O ₂ (mmHg)	48	46.4	51.4
HCO ₃ ⁻ (mmol/l)	26	24.8	22.1
BE (mmol/l)	0.4	-0.9	-4.7

Table 3

Postoperatively the baby was transferred to the NICU, intubated and ventilated without any circulatory support in stable conditions. The further course was fortunately uncomplicated: the girl was extubated on her 37th day of life, weighing almost 600 g. On day 80 oxygen therapy could be stopped, two days later she passed the 1000 g border. The closure of the ileostomy was done when she reached more than 2 kg in weight, and the child was discharged home on her 166th day of life. An anoproctoplastic operation was performed at the corrected age of 13 months.

So far, at the corrected age of 25 months with 10 kg body-weight, she is an open minded, bright girl with little developmental delay.

Summary

Unproblematic anesthetic course in a challenging patient at the extremes of age (GA 23 +3/7 weeks; 11th day) and weight (393 g), successfully and considerably ventilated and anesthetized with FLOW-i – with a pleasant outcome: in the most recent follow – up to the corrected age of 25 months.

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