Effect of Intracameral Dexamethasone Injection at Conclusion of Cataract Surgery on Macular Thickness in Diabetics

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Abstract

**Context:** To measure central macular thickness (CMT) in diabetic patients after instilling intracameral dexamethasone at the end of cataract surgery and compare this measure with control group.

**Design:** Prospective case-control study.

**Participants:** 100 eyes of 100 diabetic patients undergoing cataract extraction.

**Methods:** 50 eyes received intracameral dexamethasone 0.4mg/0.1ml at the end of surgery and 50 eyes received sham treatment as a control group. The CMT was measured before, one month, and three months after the surgery.

**Results:** The mean CMT in was 261.32 ± 9.45μm in the dexamethasone injected group while in the control group was 275.76 ± 21.36μm (p < 0.05) at the end of first month postoperatively. At the end of the third postoperative month the mean CMT was 262.34 ± 10.77μm and 264.82 ± 9.73μm in the dexamethasone injected group and the control group, respectively, (p > 0.05). The mean Intraocular Pressure (IOP) in the dexamethasone injected eyes was 14.98 ± 2.82 and 15.1 ± 2.82mmHg before and at the end of the first month following the surgery, respectively (p > 0.05).

**Conclusion:** The CMT of eyes which received intracameral dexamethasone is significantly lower than the control group at the end of first postoperative month, suggesting a possible role of intracameral dexamethasone in suppressing the early inflammatory response that can be linked to post cataract surgery macular edema in diabetics. A non significant increase in the IOP has been observed in the dexamethasone injected group this makes intracameral dexamethasone injection a possible safe practice at the end of cataract extraction in diabetics.

**Keywords:** Intracameral Dexamethasone; Cataract; Central Macular Thickness; Post- Cataract Macular Edema;

Introduction

Cataract formation and diabetic macular edema represent the main causes of visual loss among diabetic patients [1]. Cataract extraction in diabetics may be problematic as it could be complicated by either inducing macular edema or worsening of a preexisting one [2]. Thus, preventing and halting progression of macular edema is a paramount concern before deciding cataract surgery in diabetic patients. Many factors are responsible for macular edema formation following cataract surgery in diabetics with poor glycemic control and preexisting diabetic retinopathy being the most important causes [3]. Nevertheless, determining firm parameters to identify which eyes have the considerable risk remains unclear [4].

Several measures have been proposed to prevent macular edema occurrence following cataract extraction such as control of blood glucose level and topical administration of non steroidal inflammatory drugs [5].Surgical trauma induced inflammation is the main inducer of cystoid macular edema [6]. Several inflammatory mediators have been incriminated in pathogenesis of postsurgical macular edema like prostaglandins, cytokines and angiogenic growth factors [7].

Corticosteroid administration at the end of cataract surgery has been used by many surgeons to suppress surgically induced inflammation, subconjunctival injection being the most common practice [8]. Intracameral use of corticosteroid had been studied. There is evidence that the use of either intracameral dexamethasone or intracameral Triamcinolone Acetonide (TA) is equally effective in controlling postoperative inflammation after uneventful phacoemulsification [9].

The aim of the present study is to compare the central macular thickness in diabetic patients who received intracameral dexamethasone 0.4 mg/0.1 ml at the end of cataract surgery to the central macular thickness in diabetic patients who received sham treatment at the conclusion of cataract extraction surgery.

**Methods**

The study was performed at Faculty of medicine, Alexandria University hospital, between November 2016 through April 2017, Alexandria, Egypt. The study adhered to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki. Institutional Review Board (IRB)/ethics committee approval for human studies has been obtained.

Patients with visually significant cataract undergoing cataract surgery were eligible for enrollment. Visually significant cataract was defined by: any LOCS II grading ≥ 2 using the slit lamp-based Lens Opacities Classification System II (LOCS...
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Table 1: Comparison between the CMT in μm during different periods of the study in the two studied groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMT</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>1 month</th>
<th>3 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I (n=50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. – Max.</td>
<td>245.0 – 277.0</td>
<td>246.0 – 280.0</td>
<td>240.0 – 294.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean ± SD.</td>
<td>263.0 ± 6.72</td>
<td>261.32 ± 4.95</td>
<td>262.34 ± 10.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>258.5</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>p1=0.505, p2=0.249, p3=0.420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CMT: central macular thickness
p: p-value for F test (ANOVA) with repeated measures for comparing between different periods in each group.
t, p: t and p values for Student t-test for comparing between the two studied groups
p1: p-value for comparing between Baseline and after injection 1 month
p2: p-value for comparing between Baseline and after injection 3 month
p3: p-value for comparing between 1 month after injection and 3 months after injection
*
*: Statistically significant at p ≤ 0.05

Table 2: Comparison between the IOP at the baseline and after 1 month in dexamethasone injected group Group I (n=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IOP</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>1 Month After Injection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. – Max.</td>
<td>10.0 – 22.0</td>
<td>10.0 – 22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean ± SD.</td>
<td>14.98 ± 2.82</td>
<td>15.1 ± 2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p: p-value for Paired t-test for comparison between baseline and 1 month after injection.

Discussion

Intracameral dexamethasone injection appears to be effective safe practice to be adopted in any diabetic patient undergoing cataract surgery. Surgical trauma associated with cataract extraction can trigger inflammatory cascade inside the eye with resulting anterior chamber reaction, high intraocular pressure, corneal edema and cystoid macular edema with resultant slow visual recovery and poor patient satisfaction [10]. Although the breakthrough technology in phacoemulsification and IOL designs has significantly reduced the ocular inflammatory response to cataract extraction, ocular inflammation after cataract surgery remains a concern. Several studies have studied the role of intracameral steroids in reducing ocular inflammatory response to cataract surgery [11,12]. Also, intravitreal dexamethasone has long been proven to be effective in treatment of diabetic macular edema [13]. Chang DT et al. have been studied the role of intracameral dexamethasone in decreasing ocular inflammatory response in glaucomatous and non-glaucomatous eyes. They found that anterior chamber reaction was significantly reduced in the eyes which received intracameral dexamethasone without any concern regarding IOP elevation whether these eyes were glaucomatous or not [11]. In this current study it was demonstrated that intracameral dexamethasone injection at the conclusion of cataract surgery had a significant effect on CMT. Also, this effect was demonstrated in previous studies when dexamethasone is given through intravitreal route and this may be attributed to its strong anti-inflammatory properties [14,15].

Intracameral dexamethasone anti-inflammatory effect at the end of phacoflusion has been studied and this effect may be the cause of suppressing edema formation in the dexamethasone injected group in this study [9]. Safety concerns over the IOP elevation do not seem to be an issue. The current study showed that there was non-significant increase of IOP at the end of first operative month. This agrees with Chang et al. and Gungor SG al. who demonstrated that dexamethasone intracamerally does not carry a significant risk of increase in IOP [9,11].

The current study has some limitations. While intravitreal dexamethasone has a therapeutic level, the intracameral route of administration remains questionable to reach this level. In addition, although many factors have been standardized to eliminate possible confounding factors, the use of topical steroid postoperatively by the patients and whether patients were complaint or not might have some possible effect on CMT.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CMT was significantly higher in eyes which received intracameral sham injection compared to intracameral dexamethasone injected eyes. Intraocular pressure in the dexamethasone injected group showed non-significant increase. Thus, intracameral dexamethasone 0.4 mg/0.1 ml could play an important role in suppressing the inflammatory response resulting from surgical trauma and consequently preventing macular edema formation after uncomplicated cataract surgery in type 2 diabetic patients with no concerns over inducing any increase in IOP.

References


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