

The Anesthesia Perspective: The Impact of Drug Shortages on Patients and Practitioners

Arnold J. Berry, MD, MPH
Vice President for Scientific Affairs
American Society of Anesthesiologists

Disclosure

- **I have no financial relationships with any corporate entities related to this presentation**

The Scope of the Impact of Drug Shortages on Anesthesiologists

Anesthesiologists care for patients in many environments:

- **Hospitals (OR, labor and delivery, endoscopy, cardiac cath lab, radiology)**
- **Ambulatory surgery centers**
- **Surgeon and dentist offices**
- **Pain Clinics**
- **Critical care units**

ASA Drug Shortage Survey

April 2011

- **1,373 anesthesiologist responses**
- **98% experienced a drug shortage during the past year**
- **90% reported a shortage of 1 or more drug at the time of the survey**
- **Specific drugs in shortage in past year**

propofol	88%	neostigmine	52%
succinylcholine	80%	epinephrine	17%

Survey– Impact of Drug Shortages on Anesthesiologists and Their Patients

- **51% changed the procedure in some way**
- **48% felt shortages resulted in a less optimal patient outcome**
- **48% reported longer O.R. or recovery times**
- **10% postponed or cancelled procedures**

Effects of Shortages of Induction Agents

- **Propofol is the most frequently used drug to induce anesthesia and provide sedation for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures**
- **Use of other drugs for induction of anesthesia or for sedation may result in less optimal outcomes**
 - Prolonged awakening
 - Longer stay in recovery prior to discharge
 - Increased nausea and vomiting

Impact of Drug Shortages on Patients

- **Although anesthesiologists are trained to safely use multiple drugs and can often find alternatives for drugs in short supply, there are implications of these shortages:**
 - Decreased patient satisfaction (prolonged awakening, delayed discharge, nausea)
 - Adverse outcomes including death in extreme situations (e.g., trauma patients, unstable hemodynamics, airway emergencies)

Impact of Drug Shortages on Healthcare Costs

- **Significantly increased prices when drugs in short supply are purchased through an alternative source**
- **Longer procedure and recovery times drive up healthcare costs**
- **Societal and health system costs for cancelled or postponed cases**