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

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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