Original Article
Effects of ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy on stress response and renal function

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Abstract: Objective: To analyze the effects of ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy (mPCNL) on renal function and stress response in patients with kidney stones. Methods: The medical records of 105 patients with kidney stones in our hospital from August 2014 to August 2016 were retrospectively collected and divided into two groups: control group (52 patients + standard percutaneous nephrolithotomy) and observation group (53 patients, mPCNL). The perioperative indicators, stone clearance rate, renal function indicators, oxidative stress indicators, and complications before and after treatment were compared. Results: The observation group showed less intraoperative blood loss, longer operation time, lower stone clearance rate, higher incidence of fever and lower incidence of haemorrhage than the control group. Superoxide dismutase (SOD) and Glutathione peroxidase (GSH-Px) were significantly reduced in the two groups after surgery, and the reduction in the observation group was less than that in the control group (P<0.05). The incidence of septic shock, sepsis and postoperative blood urea nitrogen (BUN) in the observation group were not significantly different from those in the control group (P>0.05). Conclusion: Ultrasound-guided mPCNL for kidney stones showed a high stone clearance rate and has a small effect on renal function, which is beneficial to reduce the stress response and the incidence of haemorrhage.

Keywords: Kidney stones, ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy, standard channel percutaneous nephrolithotomy, stone clearance rate, renal function, oxidative stress

Introduction
The incidence of kidney stones in the urinary system is high and the symptoms of kidney stones commonly include vomiting and nausea, severe pain in the lower back or abdomen [1]. The causes of kidney stones formation are complex. Usually, the concentration of crystal-forming substances in the urine is increased, or their solubility is reduced. After the crystals are precipitated, they accumulate locally, eventually forming stones [2, 3]. Occupation, eating habits, environment, genetics, race, gender, and age were all risk factors that affect the formation of kidney stones. In recent years, research shows that dietary habits may be the main reason for kidney stone formation [4, 5].

There is a high incidence of kidney stones in China. If not treated in a timely manner, hydro-nephrosis may be caused, and some patients may even experience uremia [6]. The clinical treatment of kidney stones includes conservative therapies, open surgery, etc., but the treatment effects need to be improved [7].

Percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL) has also been applied in the treatment of kidney stones in recent years [8, 9]. PCNL is minimally invasive, with less intraoperative blood loss and high stone clearance rate [10, 11]. Microchannel and standard channel percutaneous nephrolithotomy are two common types. The success rate of PCNL was closely related to the establishment of percutaneous renal channel. PCNL was previously performed with X-ray guided puncture; it was limited in clinical application due to its high-dose radiation and high incidence of complications. Therefore, ultra-
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Sound-guided puncture was usually adopted during surgery [12, 13]. In order to improve the clearance rate of kidney stones and the renal function of patients as well as reduce stress and inflammatory responses, this study used ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy in the treatment of kidney stones, and its effects were compared with that of standard channel percutaneous nephrolithotomy.

Materials and methods

The medical records of 105 patients with kidney stones in our hospital from August 2014 to August 2016 were retrospectively collected and divided by treatment method. Fifty-two patients were treated with standard channel percutaneous nephrolithotomy (control group, CG), and 53 patients were treated with ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy (observation group, OG). (1) Inclusion criteria: informed consent of the patient was obtained; patients had no contraindications for surgery; ASA grade I/II; single or multiple kidney stones confirmed by abdominal CT and color Doppler imaging. The study was approved by the Medical Ethics Committee. (2) Exclusion criteria: patients who have withdrawn from treatment; patients with contraindications to surgery; history of blood transfusion/immunotherapy; combined diabetes and hyperthyroidism; mental disorders; urinary anatomical malformations; renal insufficiency; malignant tumors. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Changle County People’s Hospital. All study participants provided written informed consent before participating in the study.

Treatment methods

Surgical treatment was performed at lithotomy position with epidural block. The ureteral catheter was implanted into the bladder via the urethra and guided by soft ureteroscopy. After the ureteral orifice was located, the ureteral catheter was retrogradely inserted in the renal pelvis and fixed properly. Then prone position was adopted with the abdomen elevated, and artificial hydrenephrosis was slowly induced through the catheter. According to the specific conditions of the stone site and hydrenephrosis, the appropriate puncture points were selected, usually at the 11th intercostal, the 12th subcostal area, the infrascapular line, and the posterior axillary line. Renal calyx puncture was performed, and guided by B-mode ultrasound. The puncture needle was inserted into the calyx where the stone was located. After the puncture was completed, the zebra urological guidewire was inserted along the puncture needle. A 9 mm skin incision was made and expanded with a fascial dilator. The OG was expanded from 8F to 18F and the CG was expanded from 8F to 24F. A tubular plastic sheath was placed to establish the channel. After crushing, the stones were rinsed away with saline. The stone disintegration was observed by ultrasound.

Outcome measurement

1) The perioperative indicators. 2) Stone clearance rate was observed using an ultrasound system. 3) Renal function indexes: 2 ml fasting venous blood was collected from two groups 1 d before and 1 d after surgery, and centrifuged at 3000 r/min for 15 min to obtain the supernatant and stored at -70°C. Scr and BUN were measured by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay and performed according to the kit instructions. The kit was purchased from Shanghai Yuchun Biotechnology Co., Ltd. 4) Oxidative stress indicators: 2 ml fasting venous blood was collected 1 d before and 1 d after surgery, centrifuged at 3000 r/min for 15 min, the supernatant was obtained, and stored at -70°C. GSH-Px and SOD were measured in the same way as renal function indexes. 5) Complications between the two groups were compared.

Statistical analysis

SPSS 22.0 software was used for data analysis. Measurement data (Means ± standard deviations) that confines to normal distribution was examined by t-test. Otherwise, Mann-Whitney U test was used. [N (%)] was used to indicate count data and examined by X² test. P<0.05 indicated that the difference was statistically significant.

Results

Comparison of baseline data

There was no difference in the terms of gender, age, stone diameter, location and type between two groups (P>0.05) (Table 1).
Comparison of surgical indicators between the two groups

The intraoperative blood loss in the OG was (110.25 ± 5.85) ml, which was less than that of the CG, and the operation time was longer than that of the CG, P<0.05. * indicates comparison with the control group, P<0.05.

Comparison of stone clearance rate between two groups

The stone clearance rate in OG was 90.57% (48/53), which was higher than the 63.46% (33/52) in CG (P<0.05) (Figure 2).

Comparison of renal function indicators between the two groups

The Scr in the OG and CG before surgery was (208.46 ± 9.63) μmol L and (208.96 ± 9.58) μmol/L, the difference was not statistically significant (P>0.05). The Scr in the OG and CG after surgery was (195.63 ± 8.15) μmol/L and (195.69 ± 8.12) μmol/L, the difference was not statistically significant (P>0.05) (Figure 3).

The BUN in in the OG and CG before surgery was (17.58 ± 4.15) μmol/L and (17.62 ± 4.12) μmol/L, the difference was not statistically significant (P>0.05). The BUN in the OG and CG after surgery was (16.15 ± 3.05) μmol/L and (16.12 ± 3.02) μmol/L, the difference was not statistically significant (P>0.05) (Figure 4).

Comparison of oxidative stress indicators between the two groups

There was no statistically significant difference in GSH-P and SOD before surgery between the two groups (P>0.05). Both GSH-Px and SOD decreased after surgery in both groups, and the reduction was smaller in the OG than in CG (P<0.05) (Tables 2 and 3).

Comparison of complications between the two groups

The septic shock and sepsis rates in the OG were 1.89% and 3.77%, respectively, which exhibited no significant difference with 3.85% and 5.77% in CG (P>0.05). The fever rate in OG
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was 18.87%, which was higher than 3.85% in CG.

The incidence of hemorrhage in OG was 3.77%, which was lower than 28.85% in CG (P<0.05) (Table 4).

Discussion

Kidney stones are abnormal accumulation of crystalline substances such as cystine, uric acid, oxalic acid, and calcium in the kidney, and there is no significant difference in the incidence of kidney stones between the left and right sides [14]. Unhealthy lifestyles and dietary habits have resulted in more and more patients with kidney stones which seriously affect patients’ quality of life as well as physical and mental health [15]. PCNL is a common surgical method for kidney stones treatment. It evolved under multiple development stages. The 24F/36F channel of traditional PCNL was gradually replaced with 24F/36F [16, 17].

Haider first reported ultra-fine channel PCNL, which is mainly used for the treatment of 2-3 cm kidney stones [18].

Studies have shown that the width of the PCNL channel is not only related to the surgical procedures, the amount of bleeding and the operation time, but also related to the occurrence of complications, stress response, and renal function [19, 20]. For this reason, ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy and standard channel percutaneous nephrolithotomy were used respectively in this study.

The results of this study show that the OG has a longer operation time than the control group, but the intraoperative blood loss is less than that of CG (P<0.05). The reason is that narrower surgical channel makes the operation more difficult to perform, thus the operation time is prolonged [21]. Secondly, the fascia is less dilated in microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy, so the intraoperative blood loss is less [22]. Stone clearance rate is a crucial indicator to evaluate the success of kidney stone surgery. In this study, the stone removal rate in the OG was 90.57% (48/53), which was
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higher than the CG’s 63.46% (33/52) (P<0.05), suggesting that mPCNL has a higher stone clearance rate. This may be because the caliber of the microchannel is relatively small, which is conducive to puncture, and the size and location of the stones were more clearly determined.

Renal function indexes are clinically accepted indicators for evaluating renal function. In theory, compared with PCNL, mPCNL should have less impact on renal function. However, results of this study showed that compared with preoperative indicators, changes in postoperative Scr and BUN were not significant in the two groups, and there was no significant difference in the postoperative Scr and BUN between the two groups, suggesting that the two surgical methods have produced small effects on renal function. That may because the two surgical methods used in the study were minimally invasive, and their effects are all small, so there is no significant difference in renal function indexes after surgery [23, 24].

GSH-Px and SOD are commonly used stress indicators. In this study, the GSH-Px and SOD were reduced in two groups after surgery, suggesting that both groups of patients had a surgical stress response. However, the reduction in GSH-Px and SOD in the OG was smaller than that in the CG, suggesting that compared with PCNL, mPCNL has a lower stress response. The reason may be that mPCNL had a smaller opening and a relatively smaller impact on the surrounding renal blood vessels. In addition, the amount of intraoperative blood loss was less, so the body’s stress level was lower [25]. The incidence of hemorrhage in the OG was lower than that in CG (P<0.05). This may be resulted from the narrow channel and the light expansion intensity.

In summary, ultrasound-guided microchannel percutaneous nephrolithotomy for kidney stones showed a high rate of stone clearance, had small impacts on renal function, reducing the stress response and hemorrhaging. However, because there are only a small number of subjects included in this study and the results obtained are not sufficiently representative, comprehensive studies with larger sample sizes, longer follow-up time will be conducted.
Table 4. Comparison of complications between the two groups [n (%)]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Fever</th>
<th>Hemorrhage</th>
<th>Septic shock</th>
<th>Sepsis</th>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
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<td>2 (3.85)</td>
<td>15 (28.85)</td>
<td>2 (3.85)</td>
<td>3 (5.77)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OG</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10 (18.87)*</td>
<td>2 (3.77)*</td>
<td>1 (1.89)</td>
<td>2 (3.77)</td>
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<td>12.160</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>0.547</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>0.631</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *indicates comparison with the control group, P<0.05.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

None.

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References

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