

Evidence Update

Other Infectious Diseases Series

June 2005

Should diazepam be given to people with tetanus?

Treating tetanus with diazepam appeared more effective than with phenobarbitone plus chlorpromazine.

Inclusion criteria

Studies:

Randomized and quasi-randomized controlled trials.

Participants:

Neonates, children, and adults admitted to hospital with clinically confirmed tetanus.

Intervention:

Intervention: intravenous, rectal or oral diazepam, in any dose or dose schedule.

Control: phenobarbitone, chlorpromazine, magnesium sulphate, pyridoxine, vecuronium, pancuronium; used alone or in combination, given parenterally or orally, in any dose or dose schedule.

Outcomes:

Primary: death; need for tracheostomy or artificial ventilation.

Secondary: time to control muscle spasms; length of hospital stay; adverse events.

Results

- Two trials of 134 children included. Allocation concealment was unclear in one trial, and inadequate in the second.
- Children treated with diazepam alone appeared more likely to survive than those treated with phenobarbitone and chlorpromazine given together (relative risk 0.36, 95% confidence interval 0.15 to 0.86).



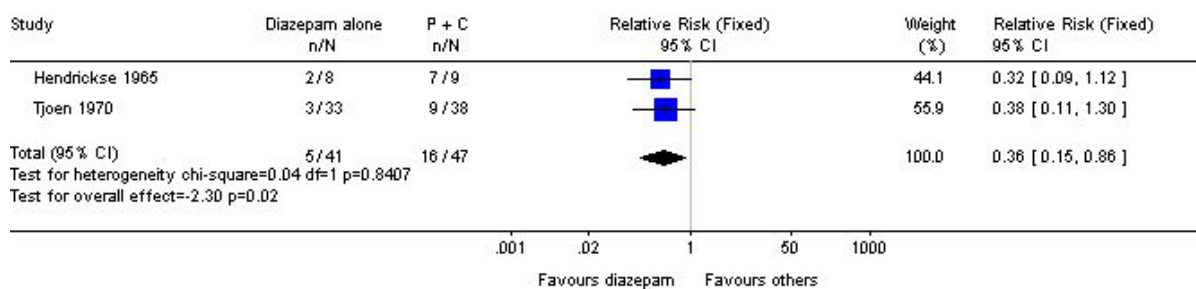
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Adapted from Okoromah CAN, Lesi FEA. Diazepam for treating tetanus. *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2004, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD003954.pub2. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD003954.pub2.

Produced by the Effective Health Care Alliance Programme (www.liv.ac.uk/evidence), Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, supported by the Department for International Development UK; and the Australasian Cochrane Centre.

Diazepam versus phenobarbitone-chlorpromazine for treating tetanus: patient deaths

Review: Diazepam for treating tetanus
 Comparison: 01 Diazepam alone versus phenobarbitone and chlorpromazine
 Outcome: 01 Deaths (in-hospital, all-cause)



Authors' conclusions

Implications for practice:

Data from two small trials suggests diazepam alone may result in fewer deaths than chlorpromazine and phenobarbitone given together.

Implications for research:

Well-designed trials evaluating the effects of drugs in tetanus are needed.