Intravenous Fe-Gluconate-Na for Iron-Deficient Patients on Hemodialysis

J. Julio Pascuala
J.L. José L. Teruelb
F. Fernando Liañoa
A. Anna Suredab
J. Joaquín Ortuñoa

Servicios de aNefrología y bHematología, Hospital Ramón y Cajal, Madrid, España

Julio Pascual, MD, Nephrology Department, Hospital Ramón y Cajal, Carr. Colmenar Viejo, km. 9,100, E-28034 Madrid (Spain)

Sir,

In their excellent work, Allegra et al. [1] concluded that the most efficient route for iron deficiency (ID) treatment in hemodialysis (HD) patients was the intravenous (i.v.) administration of Fe-gluconate-Na. They observed positive response to 20 mg of Fe3+ as Fe-gluconate-Na given i.v. after dialytic sessions to 11 patients with serum ferritin < 191 ng/ml. There are very few studies on the administration of this type of ferric salt. We have recently reported preliminary data on this therapy in a small number of patients [2] and we would like to extend these observations. Up to now, we have treated 60 ID patients on HD (serum ferritin < 50 ng/ml) with 1 g Fe-gluconate-Na (Ferrlecit, Natterman) divided in 8 i.v. doses after HD sessions. Three additional patients had secondary effects attributed to the drug (1 immediate hypotension, 1 loin pain and 1 epigastric pain) severe enough to stop the treatment. Forty patients have completed 6 months of follow-up: group I, 18 patients with pure ID anemia; group II, 10 patients with ID anemia and concomitant treatment with nandrolone de-canoate i.m. (200 mg weekly) and group III, 12 patients with ID associated to erythropoietin treatment. Characteristics of the patients and evolution of hemoglobin and serum ferritin are summarized in table 1. Hemoglobin and serum ferritin increased with therapy in all groups but after 3 months they slowly began to decrease, showing the probable need for repeated administration. In conclusion, we obtained excellent repletion of iron stores and increased hemoglobin with i.v. Fe-gluconate-Na in our severely ID population. This is of particular interest as the number of ID patients is strikingly increasing with EPO therapy and low-transfusion dependence.

Table 1. Patients treated with i.v. Fe-gluconate-Na and their evolution

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All values are expressed as arithmetic mean ± SD except for serum ferritin (geometric mean ± SD of log).
* p < 0.05 with respect to controls (paired t test). ** p < 0.01 with respect to basal values (paired t test).

References

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