

The Incidence of Nausea & Vomiting After Narcotic Administration in Thai Patients

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The incidence of emesis (nausea, retching and vomiting) after narcotic administration was highly recognized since the earliest days of surgical procedures carried out under general anesthesia. Many authors have published in the last 40 years of the incidence of post operative emesis from 40-82 percent. Most of the papers were reported from western countries.

We wonder this figure is true for Thai patients. 325 Thai patients were studied at random to assess the incidence of emesis after narcotic administration on daily operative schedule at Ramathibodi Hospital during the 1st February to 31st March 1992. The choice of anesthesia narcotic administration and dosage were freely selected by anesthesiologists and nurse anesthetists incharge. The data recorded for analysis include sex, age, premedication, anesthetic of choice and dosage, type of operations as well as severity of the symptoms and signs of emesis in recovery room until 24 hours post-operatively.

The incidence of emesis in this study is only 12.9%, much lower than previous reported from other countries. Sex and age group play a role over incidence of emesis, significantly higher in female and age over 30 years. Conventional narcotics used in Thailand, morphine, pethidine, fentanyl and nalbuphine fail to demonstrate significant advantage on each other in term of causing emesis. Types of operation may relate to incidence of emesis too, but were not analysed in this study. The different result of this study from the others may due to lower dose of narcotic required. This reflected a higher pain threshold in Thai people such as rather patience, less anxiety automatically reduces the incidence of emesis.

In conclusion, the incidence of emesis after narcotic administration is low and less severe in Thai people. Conventional narcotics nowadays create the same incidence of emesis. Selected use of more expensive drug is not necessary and routine use of antiemetic for prevention of emesis is questionable.