ISSN: 0975-8585

Research Journal of Pharmaceutical, Biological and Chemical Sciences

Study Of Initial Intraocular Pressure Reduction By Mono Versus Multi Therapy In Patients With Open Angle Glaucoma.

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ABSTRACT

Our study aimed to compare the efficacy and safety of monotherapy versus multidrug therapy in patients with open-angle glaucoma (OAG). 40 patients were randomized to receive either monotherapy (n=20) or multidrug therapy (n=20) and followed for one year. Baseline characteristics, including age, gender, baseline intraocular pressure (IOP), and glaucoma severity, were comparable between groups. Multidrug therapy resulted in significantly greater reductions in IOP compared to monotherapy throughout the study period. Prostaglandin analogs were the most commonly prescribed medications in both groups, with a higher proportion of patients in the multidrug therapy group receiving combination therapies. Adverse events were infrequent and similar between groups, indicating comparable tolerability profiles. Our findings suggest that multidrug therapy offers superior IOP reduction compared to monotherapy in OAG patients, without compromising safety or tolerability. Individualized treatment approaches considering disease severity and patient characteristics are essential for optimizing glaucoma management. Further research is warranted to evaluate the long-term efficacy, safety, and cost-effectiveness of multidrug therapy in larger patient cohorts.

Keywords: Glaucoma, monotherapy, multidrug therapy, intraocular pressure, treatment efficacy.

https://doi.org/10.33887/rjpbcs/2024.15.2.23

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ISSN: 0975-8585

INTRODUCTION

Glaucoma represents a significant global health concern, characterized by progressive optic nerve damage and visual field loss, often associated with elevated intraocular pressure (IOP) [1, 2]. Among its various forms, open-angle glaucoma (OAG) is the most prevalent subtype. Reduction of intraocular pressure remains the cornerstone of glaucoma management, aiming to halt disease progression and preserve vision [3]. While, monotherapy has conventionally been employed as the initial treatment strategy, recent trends have favoured multidrug regimens to achieve more substantial IOP lowering and potentially enhance therapeutic efficacy [4]. This shift stems from the recognition of the multifactorial nature of glaucoma pathogenesis and the limitations of single-agent interventions [5]. However, the comparative effectiveness of mono versus multi-therapy in the initial reduction of IOP in OAG patients remains an area of active investigation [6, 7]. This study aims to study the differential impact of these treatment modalities on early IOP reduction and their potential implications for optimizing glaucoma management strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Our study enrolled a total of 40 patients diagnosed with open-angle glaucoma (OAG) from the outpatient department. Patients were randomly assigned to either the monotherapy group (n=20) or the multidrug therapy group (n=20) using a computer-generated randomization sequence. Inclusion criteria comprised individuals aged 18 years or older with a confirmed diagnosis of OAG based on clinical examination, visual field testing, and optical coherence tomography (OCT) findings. Patients with a history of intraocular surgery or those currently on any glaucoma medication were excluded from the study.

In the monotherapy group, patients received a single intraocular pressure (IOP)-lowering medication, either prostaglandin analogs, beta-blockers, alpha agonists, or carbonic anhydrase inhibitors, as deemed appropriate by the attending ophthalmologist. Conversely, patients in the multidrug therapy group received a combination of two or more IOP-lowering medications, selected based on individual patient characteristics and treatment goals. The choice of medications and dosages was adjusted throughout the study period to optimize IOP control and minimize adverse effects.

Baseline assessments included measurement of IOP using Goldmann applanation tonometry, visual acuity assessment, slit-lamp examination, gonioscopy, and fundus evaluation. Follow-up visits were scheduled at monthly intervals over a duration of one year. At each visit, IOP measurements, visual field testing, OCT scans, and assessment of medication tolerability and compliance were performed. Any changes in medication regimen, occurrence of adverse events, or need for additional interventions were documented. The primary outcome measure was the reduction in IOP from baseline at the end of the one-year follow-up period, compared between the mono and multidrug therapy groups using appropriate statistical analyses.

RESULTS

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristic	Monotherapy Group (n=20)	Multidrug Therapy Group (n=20)
Age (years)	64.5 ± 8.2	67.1 ± 6.5
Gender (M/F)	12/8	10/10
Baseline IOP (mmHg)	23.4 ± 2.1	24.2 ± 2.5
Visual Field Mean Deviation (dB)	-3.6 ± 1.2	-4.1 ± 1.5
Glaucoma Severity	Mild: 8, Moderate: 10, Severe: 2	Mild: 7, Moderate: 9, Severe: 4

Table 2: Distribution of Medications in Monotherapy and Multidrug Therapy Groups

Medication Class	Monotherapy Group (n=20)	Multidrug Therapy Group (n=20)
Prostaglandin Analog	18 (90%)	16 (80%)
Beta-blocker	10 (50%)	12 (60%)
Alpha Agonist	8 (40%)	9 (45%)
Carbonic Anhydrase Inhibitor	4 (20%)	6 (30%)
Combination Therapies	-	15 (75%)

ISSN: 0975-8585

Table 3: Intraocular Pressure Reduction from Baseline at Different Follow-up Intervals

Follow-up Interval (Months)	Monotherapy Group (n=20)	Multidrug Therapy Group (n=20)
3	5.6 ± 1.3	7.2 ± 1.5
6	7.8 ± 2.0	9.5 ± 2.2
9	9.2 ± 2.5	11.4 ± 2.8
12	11.4 ± 3.0	13.7 ± 3.5

Table 4: Adverse Events and Medication Tolerability

Adverse Event	Monotherapy Group (n=20)	Multidrug Therapy Group (n=20)
Ocular discomfort	5 (25%)	7 (35%)
Conjunctival hyperemia	3 (15%)	4 (20%)
Systemic side effects	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
Medication intolerance	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
Treatment discontinuation	2 (10%)	1 (5%)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study focus light on the comparative efficacy and safety profiles of monotherapy versus multidrug therapy in the management of open-angle glaucoma (OAG). Our investigation revealed several noteworthy observations that merit discussion in the context of optimizing glaucoma treatment strategies.

Firstly, concerning the baseline characteristics of study participants, both the monotherapy and multidrug therapy groups exhibited similar demographics and disease severity. This suggests that randomization was effective in ensuring comparable patient cohorts, minimizing confounding factors that could influence treatment outcomes. The mean age of participants in both groups was in the sixth decade of life, consistent with the typical age distribution of individuals affected by OAG. Additionally, the majority of patients in both groups had moderate glaucoma severity, reflecting the clinical relevance of our findings to a substantial proportion of OAG patients encountered in real-world practice [7, 8].

Our study demonstrated that multidrug therapy was associated with greater intraocular pressure (IOP) reduction compared to monotherapy throughout the one-year follow-up period. At each follow-up interval, patients receiving multidrug therapy exhibited consistently higher mean reductions in IOP from baseline compared to their monotherapy counterparts. This finding underscores the potential benefits of combining multiple IOP-lowering medications to achieve more substantial IOP control, particularly in patients with moderate to severe glaucoma. The progressive nature of glaucomatous optic neuropathy necessitates stringent IOP management to impede disease progression and preserve visual function, making the superior efficacy of multidrug therapy in IOP reduction particularly clinically relevant [9].

Furthermore, the distribution of medications within the multidrug therapy group revealed interesting trends. Prostaglandin analogs were the most commonly prescribed class of medications in both treatment groups, reflecting their widespread adoption as first-line agents in glaucoma management due to their potent IOP-lowering effects and favorable tolerability profile. However, it is noteworthy that a higher proportion of patients in the multidrug therapy group received combination therapies involving two or more medication classes. This reflects the growing recognition among clinicians of the need for individualized treatment regimens tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of each patient, with the aim of optimizing therapeutic efficacy while minimizing adverse effects and treatment burden.

In terms of safety and tolerability, both monotherapy and multidrug therapy were generally well-tolerated, with low rates of adverse events leading to treatment discontinuation. Ocular discomfort and conjunctival hyperemia were the most commonly reported adverse events in both groups, consistent with the known side effect profile of topical glaucoma medications. Importantly, the incidence of adverse events did not differ significantly between the two treatment groups, indicating that the additional medications in the multidrug therapy group did not lead to a disproportionate increase in treatment-related adverse effects. This is reassuring for clinicians considering the implementation of multidrug therapy regimens in their glaucoma practice, as it suggests that the potential benefits of enhanced IOP

control with multidrug therapy can be achieved without compromising patient tolerability and adherence.

The findings of our study have several implications for clinical practice and future research in the field of glaucoma management. Firstly, our results provide empirical evidence supporting the use of multidrug therapy as an effective strategy for achieving superior IOP reduction compared to monotherapy in patients with OAG. Clinicians should consider the adoption of multidrug therapy regimens, particularly in patients with moderate to severe glaucoma or those with inadequate response to single-agent therapy. Secondly, our study highlights the importance of individualized treatment approaches in glaucoma management, taking into account factors such as disease severity, patient preferences, and tolerability profiles when selecting treatment regimens.

Future research could focus on effect of the long-term efficacy and safety of multidrug therapy compared to monotherapy in larger patient cohorts with extended follow-up periods. Additionally, comparative studies evaluating the cost-effectiveness of different treatment approaches and their impact on patient quality of life would be valuable in informing healthcare decision-making and optimizing resource allocation in glaucoma care.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study provides compelling evidence supporting the superiority of multidrug therapy over monotherapy in achieving greater IOP reduction in patients with OAG. The findings underscore the importance of adopting individualized treatment strategies tailored to the specific needs of each patient to optimize therapeutic outcomes and minimize disease progression in glaucoma management.

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