Hip fracture prognosis: could bioimpedance be an alternative to conventional nutritional assessment?

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PRONÓSTICO DE LA FRACTURA DE CADERA: ¿PODRÍA LA BIOIMPEDANCIA SER UNA ALTERNATIVA PARA LA EVALUACIÓN NUTRICIONAL CONVENCIONAL?

Resumen
Antecedentes: Los factores de riesgo para mortalidad en las fracturas de cadera involucran estado nutricional, nominalmente índice de masa corporal, pero no composición corporal. Considerándose la dificultad de evaluación antropométrica en pacientes acamados, un estudio prospectivo con bioimpedancia fue programado.

Métodos: Pacientes de mayor edad con fractura fueron consecutivamente recrutados. Testes bioquímicos, medidas primitivas de bioimpedancia (resistencia, reactancia y fase angle) y follow-up till one year were targeted.

Resultados: Los pacientes (N = 69, 81.2 ± 8.1 years old, 72.5% mujeres) quedaronse en el hospital por 15.5 ± 17.1 días, y el 18.8% (13/69) necesitaron de hospitalización adicional durante el mes siguiente. La mortalidad de 30 días fue 11.6%, coincidiendo con la mortalidad hospitalaria, y un 11.6% más hasta un año, así alcanzando un total de 23.2%. Anemia, hypoalbuminemia y low transferrin, along with elevated glucose and urea were frequent, suggesting undernutrition with metabolic derangements. Reactance, urea and creatinine were different in patients suffering both early and late demise. Resistance, white blood cell count and osteoporosis were risk factors for early mortality, but anemia exclusively for late mortality.

Conclusions: Primitive bioimpedance measurements, which had not been hitherto investigated, were prognostically related to early and late mortality. These markers of disease-related malnutrition and especially reactance should be further studied in patients unfit for anthropometric evaluation due to fracture and immobility.

(Nutr Hosp. 2011;26:904-906)
DOI:10.3305/nh.2011.26.4.5242


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Recibido: 7-III-2011.
Aceptado: 5-IV-2011.

Introduction

Several demographic, clinical, and nutritional findings are prognostically important for mortality after hip fracture in the elderly. Besides osteoporosis which is believed to be the hegemonic predisposing factor, emphasis is often given to low body mass index; however this is not an easy measurement in recumbent persons with major bone trauma. Not more than half of the hospitals adopt any modality of nutritional screening, therefore BMI values from previous admissions are hardly an option. Reported or estimated heights are not reliable either and traumatic edema may be a pitfall for weight interpretation, thus rendering BMI utilization questionable.

Bioimpedance analysis (BIA), though an accepted measurement of nutritional status and body compartments, has not been investigated in this context. In a prospective protocol, the hypothesis was that both early and late mortality could be associated with changes in BIA indices, especially with reactance which is sensitive to body fluid shifts.

Methods

Sixty-nine consecutive patients were investigated, 34 with fracture of neck of femur and 35 with intertrochanteric lesion. Groups were demographically and metabolically well matched therefore they are analyzed together.

Inclusion criteria were age > 65 years (males and females) and informed consent. Exclusion criteria were sepsis, shock, coma, pathologic fracture, use of corticosteroids, previous operation of the hip, use of pacemaker or refusal to participate in the protocol. Informed consent was given by all patients or caregivers, and the protocol was approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee.

Questionnaires targeting demographics and comorbidities were used, and diagnosis was based on current treatment. Derived BIA compartments (lean body mass, body fat and total body water) were not part of the protocol, only primitive findings (resistance, reactance and phase angle), as weight and height would be required in the equation. Fracture risk assessment according to the WHO/FRAX algorithm was not computed either, due to lacking BMI. The standard tetrapolar technique was applied at the healthy side of the body, after overnight fasting and voiding (BIA Quantum II, RJL Systems, Clinton Township, MI, USA).

Serum albumin, transferrin, BUN, creatinine, along with hematologic counts were measured by automated methods. Principal end-points were 30-day and one year mortality. Results (mean ± SD or percentage) were compared by Chi-Square test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) or Student’s “t” test as appropriate. Classification by tertiles for comparison of risk factors was also conducted.

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (males)</td>
<td>27.5% (19/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>81.2 ± 8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>23.2% (16/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>58.0% (40/69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
<td>44.9% (31/69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of stay (days)</td>
<td>15.5 ± 17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-day deaths*</td>
<td>11.6% (8/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-year deaths*</td>
<td>11.6% (8/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths</td>
<td>23.2% (16/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehospitalization**</td>
<td>18.8% (13/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hb (g/dL)</td>
<td>11.1 ± 1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platelets (mm³)</td>
<td>169,283 ± 56,557</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC (mm³)</td>
<td>9,504 ± 3,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lymphocytes (mm³)</td>
<td>1,542 ± 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucose (mg/dL)</td>
<td>128 ± 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urea (mg/dL)***</td>
<td>41.4 ± 12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creatinine (mg/dL)</td>
<td>0.9 ± 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferrin (mg/dL)</td>
<td>196 ± 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albumin (g/dL)</td>
<td>3.4 ± 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance (Ohm)</td>
<td>525 ± 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactance (Ohm)</td>
<td>35.9 ± 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase angle (degress)</td>
<td>7.1 ± 0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) All deaths occurred in the hospital, 15.1 ± 8.9 days after operation; (**) Further hospital admission along the year of follow-up.

Results

Patients were mostly females, and arterial hypertension, osteoporosis along with diabetes were fairly prevalent. Nearly one fifth required additional admission during the ensuing 12 months, mostly because of falls and clinical problems.

Participants suffered from some degree of anemia, hypoalbuminemia and low transferrin. In contrast white blood cell count (WBC) tended to be elevated, consistent with acute trauma and inflammation. Nevertheless creatinine was normal, with no case above 2 mg/dL (table I).

Gender and age played no role in death rate, however diminished resistance (P = 0.024) and reactance (P = 0.048) adversely affected 30-day results. As expected, participants suffering from osteoporosis had a worse outlook too (P = 0.006).

One year mortality was linked to reactance (P < 0.001) and anemia (P = 0.039). Noteworthy findings concerned also BUN and creatinine, both of which interfered with early and total mortality (P < 0.001).

Figure 1 illustrates impact on one-year mortality according to reactance values, and for comparison those of creatinine as well.
Decreased resistance points toward underweight whereas low reactance signals body fluid shifts (overhydration), conditions consistent with anemia, systemic inflammation and possible renal compromise as here demonstrated. Bioimpedance analysis could thus represent an advantage in comparison to classic anthropometrics (BMI, body weight changes), which do not distinguish between water retention or elimination and changes in fat and lean body mass.

In synthesis these variables, particularly reactance, are more specific for disease-related malnutrition, and severely impaired mobility is not a deterrent to their adoption.

Acknowledgments

This study received no financial grant and the authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

References