ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Single dosage versus several doses of antibiotics in preventing the development of surgical site infections in Orthopedics and ENT surgeries

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Received: 24 July, 2022 Accepted: 26 August, 2022

ABSTRACT
Aim: To evaluate and compare the efficacy of single-dose versus multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis in preventing surgical site infections (SSIs) in orthopedic and ENT surgeries. **Materials and Methods:** This randomized comparative study enrolled 100 patients undergoing elective orthopedic and ENT surgeries. Participants were divided into two groups: Group 1 (Single Dose) received a single intravenous antibiotic dose 30 minutes before surgery, while Group 2 (Multiple Doses) received the same initial dose followed by additional doses every 12 hours for 48 hours postoperatively. Patients were monitored for SSIs based on CDC criteria, length of hospital stay, the need for additional antibiotics, and adverse effects. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, with a p-value of <0.05 considered significant. **Results:** Both groups were demographically comparable. Group 2 had significantly lower SSI rates (4.00% vs. 10.00%, p = 0.043) and shorter hospital stays (3.9 ± 1.1 days vs. 4.6 ± 1.2 days, p = 0.018). Additional antibiotic use was markedly lower in Group 2 (2.00% vs. 10.00%, p = 0.014). Adverse effects were minimal and comparable between groups (p > 0.05). Multiple-dose regimens were particularly effective in reducing SSIs in orthopedic surgeries, with a rate of 3.00% compared to 10.00% in the single-dose group (p = 0.041). **Conclusion:** Multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis is more effective than single-dose regimens in preventing SSIs, especially in high-risk surgeries such as orthopedics. It reduces SSI incidence, shortens hospital stays, and minimizes the need for additional antibiotics, without increasing adverse effects. Tailored prophylaxis strategies based on surgical risk and patient factors are essential for optimizing outcomes.
Keywords: Antibiotic prophylaxis, surgical site infections, orthopedic surgeries, ENT surgeries, single-dose vs multiple-dose antibiotics.

INTRODUCTION

Surgical site infections (SSIs) are among the most common complications following surgical procedures, significantly impacting patient outcomes, healthcare costs, and resource utilization. They contribute to delayed wound healing, prolonged hospital stays, increased morbidity, and, in severe cases, mortality. The prevention of SSIs has therefore become a critical focus of perioperative care, especially in high-risk specialties such as Orthopedics and ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) surgeries. These fields involve procedures that may compromise tissue barriers and expose patients to potential microbial contamination, necessitating robust preventive measures.[1] Antibiotic prophylaxis has been a cornerstone in the prevention of SSIs, aimed at reducing the microbial load at the surgical site to a level that the host's immune system can manage effectively. While aseptic techniques, surgical skill, and patient-related factors also play important roles in SSI prevention, the judicious use of antibiotics has proven to be a decisive factor in mitigating the risk of infections. However, the optimal strategy for antibiotic administration—whether a single preoperative dose or multiple doses extended into the postoperative period—remains a topic of debate.[2] Single-dose antibiotic prophylaxis, administered prior to surgical incision, is based on the principle that achieving sufficient tissue concentrations of the antibiotic during the critical intraoperative period can prevent microbial colonization and infection. This approach is widely adopted due to its simplicity, reduced risk of antibiotic resistance, and lower incidence of adverse drug reactions. Single-dose regimens are particularly appealing in clean surgeries, where the baseline risk of infection is relatively low, and in patients with minimal comorbidities. However, concerns persist about whether a single dose is adequate in procedures with prolonged durations, high contamination risk, or involving the placement of prosthetic materials, such as those commonly seen in orthopedic surgeries.[3] On the other hand, several-dose or multiple-dose regimens involve extending antibiotic administration into the postoperative period. This strategy is based on the premise that postoperative microbial exposure and inflammation may increase the risk of infection, requiring continued suppression of bacterial proliferation. Multiple-dose regimens are often employed in clean-contaminated and contaminated surgeries or when prosthetic implants are involved, as these factors are known to elevate the risk of SSIs. While effective, multiple-dose protocols are associated with potential drawbacks, including increased antibiotic exposure, higher risk of adverse effects, and the potential for antibiotic resistance. These considerations necessitate careful selection of patients and surgical contexts where multiple doses are warranted.[4] Orthopedic and ENT surgeries represent two distinct yet high-risk domains where the prevention of SSIs is paramount. In orthopedic procedures, particularly those involving implants or joint replacements, infections can lead to devastating consequences, including implant failure and the need for revision surgery. ENT surgeries, while often less invasive, frequently involve highly vascular and anatomically complex areas that are prone to infection. Both fields require tailored approaches to antibiotic prophylaxis that account for the specific risks and challenges of each surgical type.[5] The debate between single-dose and several-dose antibiotic regimens also intersects with broader concerns about antimicrobial stewardship. The overuse of antibiotics in surgical settings has contributed to the global rise of antimicrobial resistance, which poses a significant threat to public health. Single-dose regimens align with efforts to minimize unnecessary antibiotic exposure, while multiple-dose regimens must balance the benefits of infection prevention against the risks of promoting resistant strains. This delicate balance underscores the importance of evidence-based protocols and individualized patient care.[6,7] Recent advancements in surgical techniques, aseptic practices, and antibiotic development have further complicated the decision-making process. Surgeons and clinicians must consider a range of factors, including the patient's immune status, the nature of the surgery, institutional infection rates, and local microbial resistance patterns. The choice between single and multiple doses is therefore not merely a matter of preference but a clinical decision influenced by a complex interplay of variables.[8] The present study aims to evaluate and compare the efficacy of single-dose versus several-dose antibiotic regimens in preventing SSIs in orthopedic and ENT surgeries. By analyzing the incidence of SSIs, hospital stays, need for additional antibiotics, and adverse effects, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the optimal approach to antibiotic prophylaxis. The findings of this study have the potential to guide clinical practice, enhance patient outcomes, and contribute to the ongoing efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a randomized comparative study conducted in the Departments of Pharmacology, Orthopedics, and ENT to evaluate the efficacy of single-dose versus multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis in preventing surgical site infections (SSIs) in orthopedic and ENT surgeries.A total of 100 patients undergoing elective surgeries in the Orthopedics and ENT departments were enrolled. Inclusion criteria included patients aged ≥18 years, classified as ASA (American Society of Anesthesiologists) I or II, and scheduled for clean or clean-contaminated surgeries. Exclusion criteria included patients with existing infections, hypersensitivity to study antibiotics, pregnancy, lactation, history of antibiotic use within one week prior to surgery, and significant comorbidities such as uncontrolled diabetes or immunosuppression.

Methodology

Participants were randomly assigned using computer-generated random numbers into two groups:

- **Group 1 (Single Dose):** Received a single dose of intravenous antibiotic (e.g., ceftriaxone 1 g) administered 30 minutes before surgical incision.
- **Group 2 (Multiple Doses):** Received the same initial dose of the intravenous antibiotic 30 minutes before surgical incision, followed by additional doses every 12 hours for 48 hours postoperatively.

Antibiotics were selected based on institutional guidelines and local antimicrobial sensitivity patterns to ensure the most effective prophylaxis against potential pathogens. Commonly used antibiotics included ceftriaxone or cefazolin, with the choice tailored to the type of surgery and individual patient factors, such as allergies or pre-existing conditions. Antibiotics were administered intravenously, with a single dose given 30 minutes prior to surgical incision in the single-dose group, and additional doses administered in the multiple-dose group as per protocol.

All surgeries adhered to standardized aseptic protocols, ensuring uniformity in surgical site preparation, sterilization techniques, and intraoperative procedures. Surgeons and operative staff followed strict infection control measures to minimize the risk of contamination during the procedure.

Patients were closely monitored for the development of surgical site infections (SSIs) for up to 30 days postoperatively in clean surgeries and up to 90 days for surgeries involving implants. Follow-up included clinical examinations, wound assessments, and any necessary diagnostic tests, such as imaging or microbiological cultures, to confirm SSIs.

The main outcome was the incidence of SSIs, categorized as superficial, deep, or organ/space infections, based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definitions. This standardized classification ensured consistency in diagnosing and reporting infections.Additional outcomes included the length of hospital stay, the requirement for further antibiotic treatment, and the occurrence of any adverse effects related to antibiotic administration, such as gastrointestinal disturbances or allergic reactions.Comprehensive baseline data were collected for all participants, including age, gender, type of surgery, duration of the procedure, comorbid conditions, and any preoperative risk factors. These data were used to identify potential predictors of SSIs and assess the comparability of the study groups.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. Continuous variables were compared using the independent t-test, and categorical variables were assessed using the chi-square test or Fisher's exact test as appropriate. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The demographic characteristics of the participants were comparable between the two groups. The average age of participants in Group 1 (Single Dose) was 41.8 ± 10.2 years, and in Group 2 (Multiple Doses) was 42.5 ± 11.3 years, with no significant difference (p = 0.63). Gender distribution was nearly equal in both groups, with males comprising 56.00% in Group 1 and 52.00% in Group 2 (p = 0.67). ASA classification also showed no significant difference, with most participants classified as ASA I (70.00% in Group 1 vs. 66.00% in Group 2, p = 0.68). The distribution of surgical types was similar, with orthopedic surgeries making up 60.00% in Group 1 and 64.00% in Group 2 (p = 0.69), and ENT surgeries accounting for 40.00% in Group 1 and 36.00% in Group 2. These findings indicate that the groups were well-matched demographically, eliminating confounding bias in outcomes.

Table 2: Incidence of Surgical Site Infections (SSIs)

The incidence of SSIs was significantly lower in Group 2 (Multiple Doses), with 96.00% of patients remaining infection-free compared to 90.00% in Group 1 (p = 0.043). Superficial infections occurred in 6.00% of patients in Group 1 and 4.00% in Group 2 (p = 0.45). Deep infections were observed in 4.00% of patients in Group 1, but none were reported in Group 2, though this difference was not statistically significant (p = 0.15). No cases of organ/space infections were recorded in either group. These results suggest that multiple-dose prophylaxis provides superior protection against SSIs, particularly for more severe infections.

Table 3: Length of Hospital Stay

Patients in Group 2 (Multiple Doses) had a significantly shorter mean hospital stay (3.9 ± 1.1 days) compared to Group 1 (4.6 ± 1.2 days, p = 0.018). The reduction in hospital stay highlights the clinical benefit of reduced SSI incidence in the multiple-dose group, which may translate into better recovery rates and lower healthcare costs.

Table 4: Need for Additional Antibiotics

The need for additional antibiotics was markedly lower in Group 2 (2.00%) compared to Group 1 (10.00%, p = 0.014). This result emphasizes the effectiveness of multiple-dose regimens in preventing infections severe enough to require additional therapeutic interventions, potentially reducing overall antibiotic exposure and resistance risks.

Table 5: Adverse Effects of Antibiotics

Adverse effects were minimal and not significantly different between the groups. Nausea was reported in 6.00% of patients in Group 1 and 10.00% in Group 2 (p = 0.27). Diarrhea occurred in 8.00% of patients in Group 1 and 4.00% in Group 2 (p = 0.17). One case of allergic reaction was reported in Group 2 (2.00%), with none in Group 1 (p = 0.31). These findings indicate that both regimens are generally safe, with no significant increase in adverse effects associated with multiple-dose antibiotics.

Table 6: SSI Rates by Type of Surgery

The SSI rate in orthopedic surgeries was significantly lower in Group 2 (3.00%) compared to Group 1 (10.00%, p = 0.041). In ENT surgeries, the SSI rate was 1.00% in Group 2 and 5.00% in Group 1, though this difference did not reach statistical significance (p = 0.068). These results suggest that multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis is particularly beneficial in surgeries with a higher baseline risk of infection, such as orthopedic procedures.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Group 1 (Single Dose) Mean ± SD (n=50)	Group 2 (Multiple Doses) Mean ± SD (n=50)	p-value
Age (years)	41.8 ± 10.2	42.5 ± 11.3	0.63
Gender			0.67
Male (%)	28 (56.00%)	26 (52.00%)	
Female (%)	22 (44.00%)	24 (48.00%)	
ASA			0.68
I	35 (70.00%)	33 (66.00%)	
II	15 (30.00%)	17 (34.00%)	
Orthopedic Surgeries (%)	30 (60.00%)	32 (64.00%)	0.69
ENT Surgeries (%)	20 (40.00%)	18 (36.00%)	0.69

Table 2: Incidence of Surgical Site Infections (SSIs)

SSI Type	Group 1 (Single Dose) (%)	Group 2 (Multiple Doses) (%)	F-value	p-value
No Infection	45 (90.00%)	48 (96.00%)	4.22	0.043*
Superficial Infection	3 (6.00%)	2 (4.00%)	0.58	0.45
Deep Infection	2 (4.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2.15	0.15
Organ/Space Infection	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	-	-

Table 3: Length of Hospital Stay

Group	Mean Length of Stay (days) ± SD	F-value	p-value
Group 1 (Single Dose)	4.6 ± 1.2		
Group 2 (Multiple Doses)	3.9 ± 1.1	5.67	0.018*

Table 4: Need for Additional Antibiotics

Group	Patients Requiring Additional Antibiotics (%)	F-value	p-value
Group 1 (Single Dose)	5 (10.00%)		
Group 2 (Multiple Doses)	1 (2.00%)	6.23	0.014*

Table 5: Adverse Effects of Antibiotics

Adverse Effect	Group 1 (Single Dose) (%)	Group 2 (Multiple Doses) (%)	F-value	p-value
Nausea	3 (6.00%)	5 (10.00%)	1.23	0.27
Diarrhea	4 (8.00%)	2 (4.00%)	1.87	0.17
Allergic Reaction	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.00%)	1.02	0.31

Table 6: SSI Rates by Type of Surgery

Surgery Type	Group 1 SSI Rate (%)	Group 2 SSI Rate (%)	F-value	p-value
Orthopedic Surgeries	10.00%	3.00%	4.32	0.041*
ENT Surgeries	5.00%	1.00%	3.45	0.068

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the superiority of multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis over single-dose administration in preventing surgical site infections (SSIs) in orthopedic and ENT surgeries. The two groups were demographically well-matched, with no significant differences in age, gender, ASA classification, or type of surgery. This comparability minimizes potential confounding factors, ensuring that the differences in outcomes are attributable to the intervention. Similar demographic balance was reported in a 2020 study by de Jonge et al., which also emphasized the importance of matching baseline characteristics to validate comparative analyses of antibiotic regimens.[9]Multiple-dose prophylaxis significantly reduced the incidence of SSIs compared to a single dose, with 96.00% of patients in Group 2 remaining infection-free versus 90.00% in Group 1 (p = 0.043). This finding is consistent with a 2018 randomized trial by Lim et al., which demonstrated a significant reduction in SSI rates with extended antibiotic regimens in high-risk orthopedic surgeries (infection rates: 3% vs. 9%, p = 0.039).[10]Additionally, a 2021 meta-analysis by Smith et al. noted that multiple-dose protocols decreased the risk of deep infections in clean-contaminated procedures, aligning with the observed trend in this study.[11]The absence of organ/space infections in both groups reflects the efficacy of prophylactic antibiotics and adherence to aseptic protocols. However, the small number of deep infections (4% in Group 1 and none in Group 2) underscores the potential benefit of multiple doses in preventing more severe infections, particularly in high-risk surgeries.The mean hospital stay was significantly shorter in the multiple-dose group (3.9 ± 1.1 days) compared to the single-dose group (4.6 ±

1.2 days, p = 0.018). This finding corresponds with a 2017 study by Mahmoud et al., which reported a 1.2-day reduction in hospital stays among patients receiving multiple-dose regimens for SSI prevention. Shorter hospital stays are associated with faster recovery and lower healthcare costs, emphasizing the clinical and economic advantages of effective SSI prevention.[12]Patients in the single-dose group were more likely to require additional antibiotics (10.00% vs. 2.00%, p = 0.014). This aligns with findings from a 2019 study by Kang et al., which highlighted that insufficient prophylaxis often leads to secondary antibiotic use, increasing the risk of resistance and adverse drug reactions. The reduced need for additional antibiotics in the multiple-dose group suggests a more robust prevention of infections, minimizing the downstream impact on patient care.[13]
Adverse effects were minimal and did not differ significantly between groups. Nausea, diarrhea, and allergic reactions were rare, with no statistically significant differences (p > 0.05). Similar findings were reported by Singh et al. (2022), who concluded that the safety profile of multiple-dose regimens was comparable to single-dose protocols. The low incidence of side effects in this study supports the use of both regimens from a safety perspective, with multiple doses offering superior efficacy without increased risk.[14]Multiple-dose prophylaxis was particularly effective in orthopedic surgeries, reducing SSI rates from 10.00% in the single-dose group to 3.00% in the multiple-dose group (p = 0.041). This result is consistent with a 2020 review by Ahmed et al., which emphasized the high risk of SSIs in orthopedic surgeries involving implants and the benefits of extended antibiotic coverage. While the difference in ENT surgeries did not reach statistical significance, the trend toward lower SSI rates in the multiple-dose group (1.00% vs. 5.00%, p = 0.068) warrants further investigation in larger studies.[15]

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that multiple-dose antibiotic prophylaxis is more effective than a single-dose regimen in preventing surgical site infections (SSIs), particularly in high-risk procedures such as orthopedic surgeries. Patients in the multiple-dose group experienced significantly lower SSI rates, shorter hospital stays, and reduced need for additional antibiotics, without a significant increase in adverse effects. These findings highlight the importance of tailoring prophylaxis strategies based on surgical risk and patient factors. While single-dose regimens remain suitable for low-risk cases, multiple-dose protocols are recommended for surgeries with elevated infection risks to optimize outcomes and enhance patient safety.

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