Author's response to reviews

Title: Outcome Of Major Cardiac Injuries At A Canadian Trauma Centre

Authors:

  Khaled Alanezi (alanezik@hotmail.com)
  G. Scott Milencoff (smilencoff@yahoo.com)
  Frank GH Baillie (Baillief@mcmaster.ca)
  Andre Lamy (lamya@mcmaster.ca)
  John D Urschel (urschelj@mcmaster.ca)

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PDF covering letter
The reviewers' comments were appreciated. We have revised the manuscript. We would have liked to submit one copy with the revisions highlighted, but we do not know how to do this electronically. The revisions are summarized as follows:

1. Results section - Pericardiocentesis was used in 4 patients. In 3 cases it was used as a temporizing treatment and in 1 it was used as part of an attempt at resuscitation (failed) in a lifeless patient. We agree that it is not a reliable (or safe) diagnostic strategy.

2. Results section - The chambers involved are given but the numbers are too small to make much of this. Repair techniques are described. Control maneuvers and CPB were not used.

3. Discussion section - We discuss CPB and mention that we did not use CPB as it is not readily available to us on a stat basis in off hours. We acknowledge that there are probably situations where it could be very helpful.

4. Results section - 13 patients had "advanced" CPR, including endotracheal intubation, at the scene or on route. They all died.

5. Results and Discussion sections - Statistical analysis confirmed what others have reported. Absence of vital signs on admission was a bleak predictor of outcome. Blunt trauma almost reached traditional significance (p=0.06) as a negative predictor of outcome. We mention that other investigators, with larger patient numbers, consistently find blunt trauma to be associated with a poor outcome.