Reviewer’s report

Title: Gradual withdrawal of remifentanil delays initial post-operative analgesic demand after thyroid surgery. A double-blinded, randomized controlled trial

Version: 0 Date: 29 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Sujoy Banik

Reviewer's report:

I thank the editors for the opportunity to review this article and I wish to congratulate the authors on their work in caring for their patients and presenting this fine manuscript. Manuscript is written very well otherwise. My main point of concern is the methodology. The remifentanil was not gradually tapered in surgery, rather it was continued postop and compared with placebo in PACU, and these infusions were run for 2 hours (120 minutes). the time required for morphine administration in remi group was 76+/- 89 mins. this looks to be a finding that is self evident. I would have thought that the tapering off be done within surgery, but surgical anesthesia protocol was same in both groups. So how can we say that the increased time needed for morphine administration was due to tapering; isnt it because of the continued presence of remifentanil? the doses of remifentanil used are quite significant. however the exact amount of remifentanil used in both groups is not mentioned. I would imagine that any difference seen in postoperative morphine consumption seen should not be an attribute of increased opioid in any group in the first place! my method of conducting this tapering would be to gradually taper in one group while switching off in the other group, at the end of surgery, to bring the actual amount(or concentrations, if possible) similar. if one group simply gets way more remi than the other, of course they will have prolonged time to ask for morphine. therefore the conclusions drawn in this study are an internal validation of the methodology and nothing more.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

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I am able to assess the statistics

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Acceptable

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