The Value of Functional Echocardiography in The Management of Mechanically Ventilated Neonates

Hesham A. Awad1, Nayera I. Attia2, Eman A. Alashmawy3, Hebatulla M. Attia4, Hala G. Elrabei5, Ghada M. Elkassass6, Shaimaa A. Hashem7.

1Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, 2Department of Medical Studies, Institute of Postgraduate Childhood Studies, Ain Shams University, 3Department of Child health, National Research Centre, 4Department of Cardiology, Faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, 5Department of NICU, Gynecology & Obestatric hospital, Ain Shams University, 6Department of Child health, National Research Centre, 7Department of Child health, National Research Centre.

Abstract

Background: Functional echocardiography (fECHO) for the neonates is a targeted bedside cardiovascular ultrasound that aiming to clinical evaluation and management of the current neonatal hemodynamic changes.

Objective: This prospective follow up study aimed at assessment of the hemodynamic changes in mechanically ventilated neonates, determination of the correlation between ventilation settings and fECHO.

Methods: fifty mechanically ventilated neonates due to non-congenital respiratory problems underwent fECHO after 24 hours of mechanical ventilation. Thirty neonates continued on mechanical ventilation and were available to 48 hours fECHO follow up.

Results: A 24 hours fECHO examination showed; highly significant negative correlation between the right ventricular output (RVO) and the peak inspiratory pressure (PIP) & mean airway pressure (MAP) (P value <0.01) and significant negative correlation with positive end expiratory pressure (PEEP) (P value <0.05). A significant negative correlation between the left ventricular output (LVO) and the MAP (P value <0.05). A highly significant negative correlation between superior vena cava flow (SVC) flow and PIP & MAP (P value <0.01), while no significant correlations found at 48 hours fECHO examination (P value >0.05). A 24 hours fECHO examination showed 14 patients had significant patent ductus arteriosus (PDA). There was highly significant increase (P value <0.01) in PDA diameter, left atrial/ aortic ratio (LA/AO ratio), LVO/SVC ratio, left mean pulmonary artery (LPA), significant increase (P value <0.05) in LVO, and highly significant decrease (P value <0.01) in SVC flow of significant PDA patients more than non-significant PDA or closed patients.

Conclusion: fECHO is an extension of the bedside clinical assessment for neonatal hemodynamic changes, it assisted in many decision taking such as closure of significant PDA, surfactant replacement therapy, increasing total fluid intake, management of pulmonary hypertension.

Keywords: fECHO in neonates, PDA with fECHO, mechanical ventilation.

قيمة الموجات فوق الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب فى علاج الاطفال حديثى الولادة على جهاز التنفس الصناعي

الخلفيه: تعتبر الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية الموجهة للقلب نوع من أنواع الأشعة التشخيصية المستخدمة لتقييم المريض بالسرير والتى تهدف إلى تحسين التقييم التشخيصى والعلاجى للمريض حيث يتم تعليم وتدريب الطبيب المعالج للقيام بها دون الحاجة إلى طبيب أشعة متخصص.

الهدف: هدف البحث إلى تقييم تغيرات الدم الديناميكية للرضيع حديثى الولادة المعتمدين على جهاز التنفس الصناعى. بالإضافة إلى إيضاح العلاقة بين ضوابط ومقاييس جهاز التنفس الصناعى ووظائف القلب.

خطة البحث: شمل البحث دراسة وصفية تتبعية على 50 وليدا حديثى الولادة ممن يعانون من مشاكل تنفسية بالجهاز التنفسى والتى ليست بسبب عيوب تكوينيه الى فحص بالموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب بعد 24 ساعه من وضعهم على جهاز التنفس الصناعى. وقد اتيح متابعة 30 وليدا فقط استمروا على جهاز التنفس الصناعى بعد 48 ساعه .

النتائج: قد اظهر فحص الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب بعد 24 ساعه وجود علاقه عكسيه ذات دلاله احصائيه ما بين ضوابط جهاز التنفس الصناعى MAP, PEEP, PIP والدم المدفوع من البطين الايمن. وعلاقه عكسيه ذات دلاله احصائيه بين MAP والدم المدفوع من البطين الايسر. وعلاقه عكسيه ذات دلاله احصائيه ما بين PEEP, PIP ومعدل سريان الدم بالوريد الأجوف العلوى. بينما لا توجد اى علاقات ذات دلالات احصائيه فى فحص الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب بعد 48 ساعه. وقد بين فحص الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب بعد 24 ساعه وجود 14 مريض يعانون من وجود وصله شريانيه مفتوحه حيث يعانون من ذيادة ذات دلاله إحصائية فى: قطر الوصلة الشريانية، الدم المدفوع من البطين الايسر،ضغط الشريان الرئوى الايسر،النسبة بين حجم الاذين الايسر والشريان الاورطي،النسبة بين الدم المدفوع من البطين الايسر و معدل سريان الدم بالوريد الاجوف العلوى. وانخفاض ذات دلاله إحصائية فى معدل سريان الدم بالوريد الاجوف العلوى.بينما هناك زيادة فى الضغط الانقباضى للبطين الايمن ولكنها ليست ملحوظة. وذلك عند مقارنتهم بمجموعه المرضى ذو الوصله الشريانيه المغلقه او غير مؤثره.

الاستنتاج: تعتبر الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب استكمال للتقييم الأكلينيكى لحديثى الولادة والتغيرات الديناميكية لسريان الدم.

الكلمات الداله: الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب لحديثى الولادة، الوصله الشريانيه المفتوحه مع الموجات الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب ، التنفس الصناعى .

Introduction:

Functional echocardiography (fECHO) is referring to usage of targeted cardiovascular ultrasound serving the clinical and medical intervention. In the intensive care units, non-ultrasound physicians are taught and trained on ECHO machine to provide the needed medical ultrasound information (El-Khuffash and McNamara, 2011).

This approach does not aim to replace the ultrasound and cardiology specialists’ job and function. It is designed to support clinical decision and provide more information to understand the physiological processes, pathological conditions, and monitor the treatment response. This is an approach that supports the clinical examination with bedside radiological assessment (Beaulieu, 2007).

Functional echocardiography is delivered from the need of continuous monitoring of the hemodynamic state of critically sick patients. In many NICUs, it is not feasible to have a cardiologist available day and night to provide urgent help. Additionally, detailed and specialty secretes and tricks of neonatology are not always provided by the pediatric cardiologist (de Waal and Kluckow, 2010).

Newborn especially preterm is considered the high risk group for mortality and morbidity. Majority of their health issues are respiratory problems, so the lung is assumed as merely one component of the cardiorespiratory system (Wyllie, 2015).

Positive pressure ventilation induces changes in intrapleural or intrathoracic pressure and lung volume, which can independently affect the key determinants of cardiovascular performance (Shekerdemian and Bohn, 1999).

Hemodynamic effects of positive pressure ventilation includes the following: a decrease in venous return of the right ventricle and left ventricle, increases in the ventricles interaction, an increase in pulmonary venous resistance, an increase in central venous pressure and a decrease in left ventricle after load. This leads to a drop in cardiac output and systolic blood pressure (Soni and Williams, 2008).

Aim of the study:

The current study was carried out evaluate the importance of functional echocardiography in the assessment the hemodynamic changes in mechanically ventilated neonates, and to determine the correlation between ventilation settings and functional echocardiography.

Design and Methods:

This prospective follow up study was conducted on fifty mechanically ventilated neonates on synchronized intermittent mechanical ventilation (SIMV) mode at NICU of Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital of Ain Shams University. The study included both preterms and full terms suffering from respiratory problems and admitted at NICU. While it excluded neonates with congenital malformations, and neonates with congenital structural heart diseases (other than patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) or foramen oval).

A written informed consents were obtained from the parents of the enrolled neonates after explanation the goals and aims of our study. All patients were subjected to; full History taking, thorough clinical examination, ventilation settings recording [mean airway pressure (MAP), fractional inspired oxygen concentration (FIO2), positive end expiratory pressure (PEEP), peak inspiratory pressure (PIP), respiratory rate (RR), inspiration time (TI), expiration time (TE), flow, and oxygen saturation, oxygenation index (O2 index)], lab investigations and chest X-ray.

All subjects underwent fECHO examination after 24 hours of mechanical ventilation, and then followed up after 48 hours of mechanical ventilation. fECHO parameters included; right ventricular output (RVO), left ventricular output (LVO), superior vena cava blood flow (SVC flow), patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and patent foramen ovale (PFO), right ventricular systolic pressure (RVSP), left pulmonary artery pressure (LPA), left atrium to aorta ratio (LA/AO ratio), ejection fraction (EF%) and shortening fraction (SF%).

Statistical methods:

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using SPSS program (statistical package for social science) version 18.

Descriptive statistics were done for numerical parametric data as inferential analyses were done for quantitative variables using independent t-test in cases of two independent groups with parametric data and paired t-test in cases of two dependent groups with parametric data, while correlations were done using Personal Correlation for numerical parametric data.

The level of significance was taken at P value < 0.05 is significant, otherwise is non-significant. The P value is statistical measure for the probability that the results observed in a study could have occurred by chance.

Results:

The study enrolled 50 neonates, they were 19 females (38%) and 31 males (62%). Nine cases were full terms (18%) and the rest 41(82%) were preterms. The mean gestational age determined by Ballard's score was 32.8 ±3.4 weeks, while the mean birth weight was 1.69 ±0.72 Kg in the study group. The causes of respiratory distress were; RDS (78%), pneumonia (16%), and transient tachyapnea of the newborn (2%). About 6% of patients had combined causes of respiratory distress diagnoses.

All patients were screened for congenital heart disease before they underwent fECHO examination after 24 hours of mechanical ventilation. Only 30 neonates of them underwent fECHO examination after 48 hours of mechanical ventilation because 10 neonates died and 10 neonates improved and shifted from mechanical ventilation.

On studying the correlation between ventricular function and ventilation parameters at 24 hours (50 patients), it was found highly significant and significant negative correlations between MAP and RVO (P value <0.01) & LVO (P value <0.05) respectively. Also, RVO was significally negatively correlated with PIP & PEEP (P value <0.05) while no significant correlation was detected between LVO and PIP & PEEP (P value >0.05) [table (2)]. After 48 hours of ventilation (30 patients) RVO and LVO showed no significant correlations with MAP, PIP & PEEP (P value >0.05) [table (3)].

The current study showed that fECHO done 24 hours post ventilation (50 patients) revealed significant negative correlation between SVC flow and PIP & MAP (P value <0.05), while not significant with PEEP (P value > 0.05) [table (2)]. On the other hand the fECHO done 48 hours post ventilation (30 patients) showed that no significant correlation was found between SVC flow and ventilator pressure parameters (PIP, PEEP and MAP) [table (3)].

Our study showed that there is positive significant correlation (P value <0.05) between RVSP and ventilation settings (PIP, PEEP, MAP and FIO2 requirements) at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO examination [table (2)]. While at 48 hours post ventilation fECHO examination there was only significant positive correlation (P value <0.05) between RVSP and MAP & FIO2 requirements [table (3)].

On comparing between the mean values of 24 hours and 48 hours post ventilation ventricular output (RVO & LVO) of the follow up group (30 patients) [table (1)], it appeared that no significant difference between them (P value >0.05). On the other hand mean value of SVC flow of the follow up group (30 patients) at 48 hours post ventilation fECHO (94.07±17.14 ml/kg/min) was significantly increased (P value <0.05) as compared to 24 hours post ventilation fECHO mean value (83.34 ±18.06 ml/kg/min) [table (1)].

Superior vena cava flow assessment at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO revealed that: Three patients out of fifty (6%) had SVC flow < 55 ml/kg/min and eight patients out of fifty (16%) had SVC flow > 55-70 ml/kg/min [figure (1)].

Twenty four hours post ventilation fECHO revealed that 14 patients had significant PDA [table (4)]. On comparing the significant PDA and non-significant (or closed) PDA patients at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO it was found that there was highly significant increase (P value <0.01) in PDA diameter, LA/AO ratio, LVO/SVC ratio, LPA, and significant increase in LVO (P value <0.05), while highly significant decrease (P value <0.01) in SVC flow of significant PDA patients more than non-significant PDA or closed patients. On the other hand the RVSP was increased but not statistically significant in significant PDA patients (P value >0.05) [table (5)].

Table (1): Comparison between 24 hours and 48 hours of mechanical ventilation settings for the followed up group:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| fECHO  | After 24 hr | After 48 hr | t-test |
| Mean | ±SD | Mean | ±SD | t | p-value |
| PDA size (cm) | 0.14 | 0.03 | 0.14 | 0.04 | 0.420 | 0.677 |
| PFO (cm) | 0.28 | 0.10 | 0.24 | 0.10 | 1.203 | 0.235 |
| LPA (m/sec.) | 0.17 | 0.07 | 0.18 | 0.07 | -0.240 | 0.811 |
| RVSP (mmHg) | 35.04 | 11.04 | 34.93 | 10.22 | 0.038 | 0.970 |
| RVO (ml/kg/min) | 206.32 | 43.79 | 222.69 | 48.33 | -1.304 | 0.198 |
| LVO (ml/kg/min) | 181.66 | 43.24 | 195.57 | 43.62 | -1.177 | 0.244 |
| SVC (ml/kg/min) | 83.34 | 18.06 | 94.07 | 17.14 | -2.240 | 0.029\* |
| LVO/ SVC | 2.22 | 0.60 | 2.08 | 0.41 | 0.997 | 0.323 |
| LA/AO | 1.07 | 0.11 | 1.08 | 0.11 | -0.313 | 0.755 |
| EF% | 66.22 | 5.08 | 65.96 | 3.42 | 0.220 | 0.827 |
| FS% | 33.48 | 3.60 | 33.48 | 2.82 | 0.000 | 1.000 |

(Non-significant if ≥ 0.05, \*Significant if < 0.05, \*\*Highly significant if < 0.01)

Figure (1) shows the distribution of SVC flow values at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO.

Table (2): Correlations between ventilatory settings and fECHO examination at 24 hours of mechanical ventilation:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| After 24hr | RVO | LVO | PFO | PDA | RVSP | SVC | LVO/SVC | LA/AO | EF% | FS% |
| PIP | r | -0.440 | -0.142 | -0.022 | 0.280 | 0.289 | -0.423 | 0.330 | -0.022 | -0.019 | -0.027 |
| p | 0.001\*\* | 0.327 | 0.885 | 0.072 | 0.042\* | 0.002\*\* | 0.019\* | 0.881 | 0.897 | 0.855 |
| PEEP | r | -0.333 | -0.245 | 0.173 | 0.055 | 0.332 | -0.204 | 0.039 | -0.051 | -0.013 | -0.023 |
| p | 0.018\* | 0.087 | 0.245 | 0.730 | 0.019\* | 0.154 | 0.787 | 0.726 | 0.930 | 0.876 |
| MAP | r | -0.369 | -0.283 | 0.122 | 0.055 | 0.396 | -0.461 | 0.248 | -0.095 | -0.052 | -0.060 |
| p | 0.008\*\* | 0.046\* | 0.413 | 0.731 | 0.004\*\* | 0.001\*\* | 0.082 | 0.510 | 0.722 | 0.680 |
| FIO2 (%) | r | -0.108 | 0.107 | 0.056 | 0.358 | 0.591 | -0.097 | 0.253 | 0.240 | -0.226 | -0.230 |
| p | 0.456 | 0.460 | 0.710 | 0.020 | <0.001\*\* | 0.504 | 0.076 | 0.093 | 0.119 | 0.112 |
| O2 Index | r | -0.265 | -0.183 | 0.246 | 0.212 | 0.510 | -0.213 | 0.178 | 0.066 | -0.146 | -0.162 |
| p | 0.063 | 0.203 | 0.096 | 0.177 | <0.001\*\* | 0.138 | 0.217 | 0.651 | 0.317 | 0.265 |
| Rate | r | -0.243 | -0.312 | 0.107 | -0.033 | 0.104 | -0.330 | 0.118 | -0.066 | -0.148 | -0.110 |
| p | 0.089 | 0.027\* | 0.475 | 0.833 | 0.474 | 0.019\* | 0.414 | 0.650 | 0.311 | 0.454 |
| TI | r | -0.226 | -0.271 | 0.128 | -0.078 | 0.122 | -0.114 | -0.075 | -0.127 | -0.066 | -0.031 |
| p | 0.115 | 0.047\* | 0.391 | 0.623 | 0.398 | 0.429 | 0.604 | 0.381 | 0.654 | 0.835 |
| TE | r | 0.227 | 0.350 | 0.048 | 0.210 | -0.071 | 0.199 | 0.055 | 0.137 | 0.262 | 0.236 |
| p | 0.112 | 0.013\* | 0.751 | 0.182 | 0.624 | 0.166 | 0.702 | 0.344 | 0.069 | 0.102 |
| I/E | r | 0.258 | 0.396 | 0.020 | 0.207 | -0.086 | 0.208 | 0.075 | 0.145 | 0.255 | 0.221 |
| p | 0.071 | 0.004\*\* | 0.895 | 0.187 | 0.551 | 0.147 | 0.604 | 0.315 | 0.077 | 0.126 |

 (Non-significant if ≥ 0.05, \*Significant if < 0.05, \*\*Highly significant if < 0.01)

Table (3): Correlations between ventilatory settings and fECHO examination at 48 hours of mechanical ventilation for followed up group:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| After 48hr | RVO | LVO | PFO | PDA | RVSP | SVC | LVO/SVC | LA/AO | EF% | FS% |
| PIP | r | 0.045 | -0.077 | 0.359 | 0.045 | 0.233 | 0.185 | -0.261 | -0.208 | 0.043 | 0.051 |
| p | 0.835 | 0.719 | 0.093 | 0.856 | 0.273 | 0.386 | 0.219 | 0.329 | 0.843 | 0.815 |
| PEEP | r | -0.016 | -0.153 | 0.500 | 0.065 | 0.342 | 0.026 | -0.197 | -0.173 | 0.130 | 0.128 |
| p | 0.939 | 0.475 | 0.015\* | 0.790 | 0.102 | 0.904 | 0.357 | 0.419 | 0.544 | 0.552 |
| MAP | r | -0.219 | -0.328 | 0.340 | 0.162 | 0.506 | 0.186 | -0.511 | -0.226 | 0.194 | 0.171 |
| p | 0.272 | 0.095 | 0.089 | 0.470 | 0.007\*\* | 0.353 | 0.006 | 0.257 | 0.333 | 0.394 |
| FIO2 (%) | r | -0.152 | -0.141 | 0.443 | 0.235 | 0.528 | 0.127 | -0.277 | -0.066 | 0.123 | 0.134 |
| p | 0.450 | 0.482 | 0.023\* | 0.293 | 0.005\*\* | 0.528 | 0.162 | 0.744 | 0.541 | 0.506 |
| O2 Index | r | -0.226 | -0.292 | 0.390 | 0.124 | 0.416 | 0.022 | -0.347 | -0.122 | 0.204 | 0.173 |
| p | 0.257 | 0.140 | 0.049\* | 0.582 | 0.031\* | 0.912 | 0.076 | 0.543 | 0.308 | 0.388 |
| Rate | r | -0.104 | -0.227 | 0.448 | -0.037 | 0.347 | -0.039 | -0.256 | -0.113 | 0.221 | 0.271 |
| p | 0.628 | 0.287 | 0.032 | 0.882 | 0.097 | 0.858 | 0.227 | 0.599 | 0.299 | 0.199 |
| TI | r | -0.133 | -0.177 | -0.281 | -0.385 | 0.102 | -0.223 | -0.008 | -0.123 | 0.219 | 0.328 |
| p | 0.536 | 0.409 | 0.194 | 0.104 | 0.635 | 0.294 | 0.971 | 0.568 | 0.304 | 0.117 |
| TE | r | 0.113 | 0.196 | -0.179 | 0.282 | -0.229 | -0.066 | 0.347 | 0.118 | -0.232 | -0.335 |
| p | 0.599 | 0.358 | 0.415 | 0.242 | 0.281 | 0.758 | 0.097 | 0.582 | 0.276 | 0.109 |
| I/E | r | 0.103 | 0.218 | -0.143 | 0.400 | -0.211 | -0.020 | 0.321 | 0.142 | -0.290 | -0.403 |
| p | 0.631 | 0.305 | 0.516 | 0.090 | 0.323 | 0.927 | 0.126 | 0.507 | 0.169 | 0.051 |

(Non-significant if ≥ 0.05, \*Significant if < 0.05, \*\*Highly significant if < 0.01)

Table (4): Percentage of patients with significant PDA 24 hours post ventilator fECHO examination:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PDA significance | No. | % |
| Non-significant or closed PDA | 36 | 72 |
| Significant PDA | 14 | 28 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |
|  |  |  |

This table shows that 28% of patients had significant PDA during 24 hours post ventilator fECHO examination.

Table (5): Comparison between significant PDA and non-significant (or closed) PDA patients as regards fECHO parameters at 24 hours post ventilation examination:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| fECHO | PDA significance | t-test |
| Non- significant or closed PDA (no. 36) | Significant PDA(no. 14) |
| Mean | ±SD | Mean | ±SD | t | p-value |
| RVO(ml/kg/min) | 211.70 | 42.89 | 204.54 | 37.49 | 0.548 | 0.586 |
| LVO(ml/kg/min) | 177.34 | 35.06 | 206.33 | 44.02 | -2.441 | 0.018\* |
| SVC(ml/kg/min) | 90.57 | 19.21 | 69.22 | 11.58 | 3.878 | <0.001\*\* |
| LA/AO | 1.05 | 0.09 | 1.20 | 0.11 | -5.033 | <0.001\*\* |
| LVO/SVC | 2.00 | 0.48 | 2.98 | 0.43 | -6.753 | <0.001\*\* |
| RVSP (mmHg) | 34.69 | 11.11 | 38.21 | 10.81 | -1.013 | 0.316 |
| PDA size(cm) | 0.14 | 0.03 | 0.20 | 0.06 | -4.423 | <0.001\*\* |
| LPA (m/sec.) | 0.14 | 0.05 | 0.31 | 0.06 | -10.265 | <0.001\*\* |

(Non-significant if ≥ 0.05, \*Significant if < 0.05, \*\*Highly significant if < 0.01)

Discussion:

Adequacy of neonatal blood flow and hemodynamic circulation is determined by echocardiographic assessment of LVO and RVO (El-Khuffash & Manamara, 2011). The SVC flow has been proposed to be a better ECHO measure of systemic blood flow as it reflects exclusive venous return from the head and upper part of body and is untainted by shunts (Kluckow and Evans), 2000).

Hemodynamic effects of positive pressure ventilation includes the following: a decrease in venous return of the right ventricle and left ventricle, increases in the ventricles interaction, an increase in pulmonary venous resistance, an increase in central venous pressure and a decrease in left ventricle after load. This leads to a drop in cardiac output and systolic blood pressure (Soni and Williams, 2008).

On studying the correlation between ventricular function and ventilation parameters at 24 hours (50 patients), it was found highly significant and significant negative correlations between MAP and RVO & LVO (P value <0.01) & (P value <0.05) respectively. Also, RVO significally negatively correlated with PIP & PEEP (P value <0.05) while no significant correlation was detected between LVO and PIP & PEEP (P value >0.05) [table (2)]. That could be explained by the presence of significant PDA.

After 48 hours of ventilation RVO and LVO showed no significant correlations with MAP, PIP & PEEP (P value >0.05). These findings might be due to decrease of sample size as only the remaining 30 patients on mechanical ventilation who underwent for fellow up fECHO at 48 hours [table (3)].

The current study showed that fECHO done 24 hours post ventilation (50 patients) revealed significant negative correlation between SVC flow and PIP & MAP (P value <0.05), while not significant with PEEP (P value > 0.05) [table (2)]. On the other hand the fECHO done 48 hours post ventilation (30 patients) showed that no significant correlation was found between SVC flow and ventilator pressure parameters (PIP, PEEP and MAP) [table (3)], which could be explained by increasing the total fluid intake for patients with low SVC flow, treating significant PDA, or decreased sample size in the follow up group.

The key parameter affecting interactions is MAP which directly influences mean intrathoracic pressure. MAP is the difference between PIP and PEEP {MAP = [(PIP-PEEP) × TI / TI+TE] + PEEP} (Donn, 2012).

In addition, the mean PEEP used for our cases was 5.09 ±0.62 cmH2O at 24 hours of ventilation (50 patients) and 5.39 ±0.70 cmH2O at 48 hours of ventilation (30 patients). These means of PEEP were considered as low as to affect the SVC flow.

Many studies and reviews consider PEEP levels less than 5 cm H2O a low PEEP, and PEEP levels more than 5 cm H2O a high PEEP. The PEEP cut-off value at 5 cm H2O is a common value applied in many neonatal units (De Waal et al., 2007) and (Bamat et al., 2012).

Our study showed that there is positive significant correlation (P value <0.05) between RVSP and ventilation settings (PIP, PEEP, MAP and FIO2 requirements) at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO examination [table (2)]. While at 48 hours post ventilation fECHO examination there was only significant positive correlation (P value <0.05) between RVSP and MAP & FIO2 requirements [table (3)].

Pulmonary hypertension and RVSP is directly related to pulmonary vascular resistance of the lung and neonatal prematurity (Mertens et al., 2011). That explains the relation between the RVSP and high ventilation pressures and oxygen requirements.

This study showed that; at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO the mean value of RVO was 209.7 ±41.2 ml/kg/min and the mean value of LVO was 185.46 ±39.56 ml/kg/min (50 patients). While at 48 hours post ventilation fECHO the mean value of RVO was 222.69 ±48.33 ml/kg/min and the mean value of LVO was 195.57 ±43.62 ml/kg/min (30 patients). On comparing between 24 hours and 48 hours ventricular output (RVO & LVO) for follow up group (30 patients) revealed that no significant difference between them [table (1)].

Normal values for both right and left ventricular outputs range from 170 to 320 ml/kg/min. A cut off value of RVO or LVO is less than 150 ml/kg min and it is associated with increased morbidity and mortality (De Waal and Kluckow, 2010). The averages of our patients’ results are consistent with other many studies done to determine the normal average values of ventricular output (Noori et al., 2012), (Popat and Kluckow, 2012) and (Lakkundi et al., 2014).

The current study revealed that at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO the mean of SVC flow was 84.59 ±19.82 ml/kg/min (50 patients), while at 48 hours post ventilation fECHO it was 94.07±17.14 ml/kg/min (30 patients).

Comparison between 24 hours and 48 hours SVC flow for follow up group (30 patients) revealed the presence of significant increase in the mean of 48 hours SVC flow [table (1)], it was 83.34 ±18.06 ml/kg/min at 24 hours fECHO examination compared by 94.07±17.14 ml/kg/min at 48 hours fECHO examination, which can be explained by increasing total fluid intake for patients with low SVC flow and presence of PDA significant patients that received medical treatment. The ranges of our patients’ results are consistent with (Groves et al., 2008) and (Lakkundi et al., 2014). The cut-offs are usually within a range of 40–55 mL/kg/min and are generally based on the findings of earlier studies (McGovern and Miletin, 2017). However, SVC flow < 50-55 ml/kg/min has been proven to be associated with poor neurological and developmental outcome (Groves et al., 2008).

Superior vena cava flow assessment at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO revealed that: Three patients out of fifty (6%) had SVC flow < 55 ml/kg/min and eight patients out of fifty (16%) had SVC flow > 55-70 ml/kg/min [figure (1)].

Twenty four hours post ventilation fECHO revealed that 14 patients had significant PDA [table (4)]. Assessment of PDA in our study was done by clinical examination and supported by two dimensional and colour Doppler fECHO to reveal the diagnostic criteria of PDA significance (Sehgal and McNamara, 2009).

On comparing the significant PDA and non-significant (or closed) PDA patients at 24 hours post ventilation fECHO it was found that there was highly significant increase (P value <0.01) in PDA diameter, LA/AO ratio, LVO/SVC ratio, LPA, and significant increase in LVO (P value <0.05), while highly significant decrease (P value <0.01) in SVC flow of significant PDA patients more than non-significant PDA or closed patients. On the other hand the RVSP was increased but not statistically significant in significant PDA patients (P value >0.05) [table (5)].

The hemodynamic significance of PDA is determined by many criteria depending on ductal size, flow pattern and direction of the shunt. Increased left to right shunt leads to reversed diastolic flow in descending aorta, with increased left atrial and left ventricular enlargement. Significant hemodynamic shunt is associated with proportional increase in LVO and decrease in SVC flow (Sehgal and McNamara, 2009).

Conclusions:

From the results of this study we conclude that:

Application of fECHO in NICU is considered as an extension of the bedside clinical assessment. Functional echocardiography has a great importance in assessing cardiac output, PDA significance, RVSP, contractility, vascular filling and SVC flow. More studies are needed to document the correlation between ventilation settings and fECHO parameters.

Recommendations:

From the results of this study we recommend that:

Wide application of fECHO in the NICU with continues training and education of neonatologists performing fECHO. Decision taking and management of sick neonates should be started after targeted fECHO examination. Large cohort studies are needed to reveal the correlations between changes of different ventilation setting parameters and fECHO findings.

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قيمة الموجات فوق الصوتية الوظيفية للقلب فى علاج الاطفال حديثى الولادة على جهاز التنفس الصناعي

أ.د هشام عبد السميع عوض

استاذ طب الأطفال وحديثى الولادة

كلية الطب

جامعة عين شمس

أ.د نيره اسماعيل عطيه

استاذ طب الأطفال وحديثى الولادة

معهد الدراسات العليا للطفولة

جامعة عين شمس

أ.د ايمان عبد الوهاب العشماوى

استاذ صحة الطفل

قسم صحة الطفل

المركز القومى للبحوث

أ.م. د. هبة الله محمد عطيه

استاذ مساعد

امراض القلب والأوعية الدموي

كلية الطب

جامعة عين شمس

د. هاله جابر الربيعى

زميل

وحدة الرعاية المركزة لحديثى الولادة بمستشفى امراض النساء والتوليد

كلية الطب

جامعة عين شمس

أ.م. د. غاده محمود القصاص

استاذ مساعد صحة الطفل

قسم صحة الطفل

المركز القومى للبحوث

د. شيماء عبد الخالق محمد هاشم

باحث مساعد صحة الطفل

قسم صحة الطفل

المركز القومى للبحوث