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Comprehensive review

Incidence, prevalence, and predictors of chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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ABSTRACT

Chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN) is a disabling pain condition resulting from chemotherapy for cancer. Severe acute CIPN may require chemotherapy dose reduction or cessation. There is no effective CIPN prevention strategy; treatment of established chronic CIPN is limited, and the prevalence of CIPN is not known. Here we used a systematic review to identify studies reporting the prevalence of CIPN. We searched Embase, Medline, CAB Abstracts, CINAHL, PubMed central, Cochrane Library, and Web of Knowledge for relevant references and used random-effects meta-regression to estimate overall prevalence. We assessed study quality using the CONSORT and STROBE guidelines, and we report findings according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidance. We provide a qualitative summary of factors reported to alter the risk of CIPN. We included 31 studies with data from 4179 patients in our analysis. CIPN prevalence was 68.1% (57.7–78.4) when measured in the first month after chemotherapy, 60.0% (36.4–81.6) at 3 months and 30.0% (6.4–53.5) at 6 months or more. Different chemotherapy drugs were associated with differences in CIPN prevalence, and there was some evidence of publication bias. Genetic risk factors were reported in 4 studies. Clinical risk factors, identified in 4 of 31 studies, included neuropathy at baseline, smoking, abnormal creatinine clearance, and specific sensory changes during chemotherapy. Although CIPN prevalence decreases with time, at 6 months 30% of patients continue to suffer from CIPN. Routine CIPN surveillance during post-chemotherapy follow-up is needed. A number of genetic and clinical risk factors were identified that require further study.

1. Introduction

Chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN) is a disabling side effect of several commonly used antineoplastic agents. The development of CIPN may require chemotherapy dose reduction or cessation, which can increase cancer-related morbidity and mortality [17,31]. CIPN is a predominantly sensory neuropathy that may be accompanied by motor and autonomic changes [62]. Similar to other neuropathic pain conditions, pain in CIPN can be stimulus dependent or independent [66]. The pathophysiology of CIPN is poorly understood, and treatments to prevent CIPN are inadequate. Meta-analyses of clinical trials for CIPN prevention report inconclusive results [1,49]. Treatment options for established CIPN are also limited. Clinical trials of antiepileptic or antidepressant agents to treat other neuropathic pain conditions have generally been negative [30,41,54,55]. Only 1 recent, double-blind, randomized controlled trial showed improvement in CIPN symptoms after 5 weeks of treatment with duloxetine [57].

Understanding of the epidemiology of CIPN is also limited [37]. Previous studies have largely focussed on individual chemotherapeutic agents, with reported CIPN incidence rates ranging from 19% to more than 85% [23]. Annually 165,544 patients survive cancer in the United Kingdom, and more than 1 million in the United States [12,44]. It is therefore important to provide a more precise measure of the prevalence of CIPN to allow appropriate resource

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allocation and research planning, and to inform patient decisions about treatment. Understanding risk factors (including genetic risk factors) for CIPN may guide future research and treatment.

Previous reviews of CIPN have combined narrative review with expert opinion, with potential risk of bias [15,28,29]. Here we present what we believe to be the first systematic review and meta-analysis of the incidence and prevalence of CIPN. We also aimed to assess the influence of potential publication bias on our estimation of CIPN measures, and to seek empirical evidence of the impact of study design factors.

2. Methods

2.1. Search strategy

We searched Embase, Medline, CAB Abstracts, CINAHL, PubMed central, Cochrane Library and Web of Knowledge in July 2013 for English-language references. Searches were not limited by date restrictions. Search terms were free text and included; [''Chemotherapy Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Chemotherapy Induced Neurotoxicity'' OR ''Chemotherapy Induced Neurotoxicity Syndromes'' OR ''CIPN'' OR ''Oxaliplatin Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Bortezomib Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Paclitaxel Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Taxane Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Cisplatin Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Vincristine Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Thalidomide Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Platinum Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Carboplatin Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Docetaxel Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Proteasome Inhibitor Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR Neurotoxic Chemotherapy Induced Peripheral Neuropathy'' OR ''Cancer Neuropathic Pain'' OR ''Chemotherapy Induced Neuropathic Pain''] [Search 1] AND [''Prevalence'' OR ''Epidemiology'' OR ''Occurrence'' OR ''Burden''] [Search 2] AND [''Predictors'' OR ''Risk Factors''] [Search 3]. The search strategy was adapted for each database (see supplementary text A). We also hand searched reference lists of relevant studies and systematic reviews of CIPN prevention trials, and searched the databases of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN). Our review followed an a priori protocol according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [43]. The review protocol was registered on the PROSPERO website before data extraction (registration no. CRD42013005524) [11].

2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria and study selection

We included prospective observational studies of adult cancer patients receiving chemotherapy of any type. Our definition of observational studies included cohort studies in which patients were prospectively identified and followed up using relevant predefined outcomes of interests. We also included control group data from randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of CIPN prevention in which details of the patients who developed CIPN were reported.

Studies were excluded if they described animal models of CIPN, were investigating CIPN treatment or prevention, included pediatric populations, or investigated other causes of neuropathy in cancer patients (eg, pre-existing neuropathy such as diabetic neuropathy or other cancer related causes of neuropathy such as post-mastectomy).

Two investigators (M.S. and S.R.) independently read and selected from all the retrieved references and abstracts. Discrepancies between the reviewers' selections were resolved by discussion. Full texts of potentially eligible studies were retrieved (Fig. 1).

2.3. Data extraction and quality assessment

We extracted data to a bespoke form, recording the prevalence or incidence of CIPN, and any reported risk factors or predictors of CIPN. We included all relevant outcomes determined after the end of chemotherapy, noting the time (in relation to the end of chemotherapy) at which these were assessed. Where information was incomplete we contacted authors by email. Two investigators (M.S. and S.R.) extracted data, which were then entered into the study database. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion and agreement with a third reviewer (M.F.).

We assessed study quality according to the PRISMA guidelines [43]. We evaluated risk of bias in individual studies using the following criteria: investigator blinding of any type, presence of a control group, use of externally validated instruments for CIPN assessment, clear description of statistical methods used to identify CIPN predictors, and description of longitudinal follow up. Adherence of each study to relevant reporting criteria (STROBE or CONSORT) was assessed [2,61]. We assessed the risk of bias for our summary estimate by seeking evidence of publication bias, selective outcome reporting bias (if a published protocol of the included study was available), reporting of a sample size calculation, and whether the study reported participants lost to follow-up.

2.4. Data synthesis and analysis

Our primary outcome was the prevalence of CIPN. We used random effects meta-regression to quantify heterogeneity and its potential sources. We hypothesized that chemotherapy type and the time of CIPN assessment would explain a large proportion of the observed heterogeneity. Therefore, we included chemotherapy type, last time point of CIPN assessment, and measures of study quality as independent variables in our regression model. We also planned for assessment of risk factors for CIPN across studies. We assessed publication bias using funnel plots, Egger's test, and trim and fill [22]. We appraised studies using STROBE criteria for observational studies and CONSORT criteria for trials. Where a criterion was partially met, we considered, for the purposes of this analysis, that it was completely met, for ease of calculation. In open label studies (Table 1), we modified the CONSORT criteria by not considering the point for blinding, to account for the design of these studies. STATA 13.1 was used for statistical analyses.

3. Results

3.1. Studies included

We identified 4128 potentially relevant studies, and examined the full text of 138. A total of 31 studies (involving 4179 patients) [4–9,13,14,18,21,24–27,32–36,38,39,45–48,52,53,60,63–65] met our inclusion criteria. A total of 30 studies reported the incidence of CIPN (new CIPN cases divided by the population at risk). One study reported CIPN prevalence (all CIPN cases divided by population at risk) [26]. Because CIPN might have occurred, and resolved, between study assessments, we calculated the prevalence of CIPN at the time of each assessment [59].

3.2. Study characteristics

Of the 31 studies included, 15 were prospective cohort studies, 10 were RCTs, 5 were nonrandomized controlled trials, and 1 was a cross-sectional cohort study. All nonrandomized controlled trials were open labeled and not blinded. Eight of 10 RCTs (80%) reported investigator blinding of some type. Blinded assessment of outcome was reported in 3 of 14 prospective cohort studies. One prospective