Design and Rationale for the Postoperative Vascular Events in Unrecognized Obstructive Sleep Apnea (POSA) Trial

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Introduction

• Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is the most common type of sleep disordered breathing.1
• Unfortunately, the majority of these patients are undiagnosed at the time of surgery.2
• Emerging epidemiological data suggest that OSA is common in the surgical population.
• The extent of unrecognized OSA in causing postoperative vascular events is currently unknown.

Hypothesis: Repeated episodes of nocturnal hypoxia predispose patients with OSA to vascular complications after surgery.

Aim: Determine the effect of unrecognized OSA on postoperative vascular complications in moderate-to-high risk patients undergoing major noncardiac surgery.

Methods

• Postoperative vascular events in unrecognized OSA or POSA Trial commenced in 2011.
• Clinical Trial Registry: NCT 01949181.
• Prospective multicenter observational cohort study (Hong Kong, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore).
• Ethics board approval and informed consent from all patients obtained.
• Funding support by 4 peer-reviewed grants: Health and Health Service Research Fund (09100351), Food and Health Bureau, Hong Kong; University Health Network Foundation, University of Toronto; University Malaya, High Impact Research Grant; Alexandra Health Singapore, Small Innovation Grant.
• Total projected sample size: approximately 1,200 patients.
• Inclusion Criteria:
  1. Age ≥ 45 years
  2. Elective major abdominal / thoracic / orthopedic / vascular surgery staying ≥ 3 nights
  3. History of at least one risk factor for postoperative vascular event (Ischemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, serum Cr ≥ 170 μmol/L)
• All patients underwent a portable diagnostic system (ApneaLink, Resmed, San Diego, CA) preoperatively to determine the presence of and severity of OSA before surgery.
• Results of the Level 3 ambulatory sleep studies are blinded until 30 days after surgery.
• Serial plasma samples are collected for measurement of cardiac troponin T concentrations during the first 3 days after surgery. Serial daily ECGs are performed.

Primary Outcome = composite endpoint of postoperative vascular complication including myocardial infarction; nonfatal cardiac arrest; stroke; pulmonary embolism; congestive heart failure; new clinically significant atrial fibrillation and cardiac death within 30 days of surgery.

• The POSA trial has recruited >120 patients in 4 countries to date.
• 56% are females and 44% males. Mean (± standard deviation) age is 61 (± 12) years.
• 25% have documented coronary artery disease, 10.6% have a history of peripheral arterial disease, and 41.2% have diabetes.
• 36% of patients had OSA with apnea-hypopnea index (AHI) > 5 /hour. 7% of patients had moderate OSA with AHI 15-30/hour, and 6% of patients had severe OSA with AHI > 30/hour.
• Details are illustrated in Table 1.

Results

| Table 1 |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Age in years Mean (SD)       | 61 (12)       | -         |
| Gender                       |               |           |
| Male                         | 67            | 56%       |
| Female                       | 53            | 44%       |
| Cardiac Risk Factors         |               |           |
| Coronary Artery Disease      | 30            | 25%       |
| Peripheral Arterial Disease  | 13            | 11%       |
| Diabetes Mellitus            | 49            | 41%       |
| Apnea-Hypopnea Index (/ hr)  |               |           |
| Mild OSA (5-15)              | 28            | 23%       |
| Moderate (15-30)             | 8             | 7%        |
| Severe (>30)                 | 7             | 6%        |

Conclusion

• POSA Trial will provide a reliable assessment of the magnitude and severity of unrecognized OSA in the surgical population.
• It will determine the independent risks of postoperative vascular events in patients with unrecognized and untreated OSA.

References