Sacred Cow Spotted in NICU

Changing the Atropine Dose for Smallest Infants
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Since the early 1970s, NICU practice has been to give a minimal 1 ml (0.1 mg) dose of atropine in order to prevent “paradoxical bradycardia” associated with lower doses. New evidence has emerged to suggest that this is a sacred cow practice. Minimum dose for atropine stems from a single study that has been widely cited. Stronger evidence now suggests minimal dose for atropine is not justified and for infants < 5 kg leads to a progressively larger dose per kg that may be toxic. This sacred cow was spotted in the UIHC NICU where the recommended dose for atropine is now 0.02mg/kg. Current efforts to change practice based on the evidence are aimed at revising the IPR Emergency Drug Dose lists for Pediatrics and Neonates, Pediatric Emergency Management (orange) Card, PICU Emergency Card, and at staff education. See references below or contact Janet-Geyer@uiowa.edu for more information.

Old practice habits or sacred cows, those practices considered routine and above dispute, are particularly resistant to change. UIHC Nursing is moving from tradition to evidence-based practices (EBP) and putting sacred cows to pasture. For more information about sacred cows (link to previous blog) or resources for EBP (link to resources), contact Nursing Research and EBP, Kirsten-Hanrahan@uiowa.edu.

References


