Intra-articular corticosteroid injections for care of hip dislocations in cerebral palsy adults

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Introduction.– The incidence of hip dislocations in cerebral palsy is significant [1], requiring prevention, including botulinum toxin injections [2] from childhood. Hip dislocation may be diagnosed with delay, causing persistent pain. Intra-articular corticosteroid hip injections may temporarily relieve pain and delay surgery.

Observation.– In University Hospital of Montpellier, from July 2009 to January 2011, four non-walking patients with cerebral palsy, 15 to 25 years old, with unilateral hip dislocation, had intra-articular hip corticosteroids with local anaesthesic injections for three of them. Patients 1, 2 and 3 had botulinum toxin injections in periaricular muscles in the same time.

Results.– For patient 1, injection of corticosteroids resulted in total pain relief at 48 hours lasting 3 months (hetero assessment, pain VAS impossible), the intervention was repeated three times. Regarding temporary benefit and severe pain, the patient had a soft-tissue surgery of the hip 3 months after the last injection.

For patient 2, injection of corticosteroids resulted in a decrease in pain immediately after the intervention and for 1 month (hetero assessment, pain VAS impossible). He then had a femoral valgisation osteotomy 4 months later. For patient 3, one first injection was effective on pain, so repeated 5 months later with long-lasting effect and no need for surgery.

For patient 4, the injection was inefficient (pre-injection VAS 70/100 and immediately post-injection 60/100, at 2 months 70/100). Due to the severity of pain and grade IV chondropathy on scan imaging, hip arthroplasty was proposed.

Conclusion.– Corticosteroids associated with an anaesthetic test may have diagnostic and therapeutic value, achieving pain relief for three patients which lasted several weeks. Injections may result in a decrease in osteoarticular pain, while botulinum toxin has an effect on the muscular component of pain. This type of intervention is not described in the literature for cerebral palsy adult patients.

Further reading