

PEROPERATIVE EVALUATION IN COPD PATIENTS



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Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is characterized by persistent respiratory symptoms and progressive airflow limitation caused by repeated inhalation of noxious particles or gases [1]. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) with chronic shortness of breath, cough and sputum is a common comorbidity in patients undergoing surgical procedures [2]. COPD occurs in middle and elderly people and generally in smokers. On the other hand, in adult patients without a diagnosis of COPD and asthma, increased length of hospital stay and decreased pulmonary function tests (PFT) were found due to smoking and respiratory symptoms [3]. In previous studies, patients who underwent major surgical procedures had to use a forced and prolonged mechanical ventilator in the postoperative period. It has been demonstrated that COPD is an independent risk factor in mortality due to the need for support and the development of ventilator-associated pneumonia [4-7]. The presence of comorbidities such as lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, obesity, obstructive sleep apnea (Overlap syndrome) together with COPD increases the risk of complications and mortality related to surgical procedures [8-11]. It is recom-

mended that elective surgical procedures be delayed during acute exacerbations of COPD. It has been reported that the use of antibiotics together with systemic corticosteroids in the early period provides better postoperative results [12-13].

In patients with COPD, the risks of general anesthesia increase more in thoracic surgical procedures. Surgical procedures with single lung ventilation, lateral decubitus position, open pneumothorax are the reasons for the increase of these risks. Single lung ventilation application during the operation is performed for reasons such as lung resection surgeries, thoracoscopy, esophagus and thoracic aorta operations, infection and hemorrhage limited to one lung, hypoxemia due to single lung disease, tracheobronchial damage, bronchopleural fistula, large cyst or bulla of the lung. Double lumen tube, bronchial blocker and single lumen endobronchial tubes are used for this procedure. Since single lung ventilation will cause insufficient use of lung capacity and increase the risk of perioperative complications, patients with COPD should be evaluated and followed more carefully.

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less irritant agent such as sevoflurane. Lung transplantation and in volume reduction surgery, total intravenous anesthesia may be preferred to inhalation agents [41]. Non-invasive mechanical ventilation application to the high-risk patient after the operation can reduce the work of breathing. Non-invasive ventilation should be avoided in patients with excessive secretion and when airway reflexes are lost [2].

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Since COPD patients undergoing bullectomy have a limited respiratory reserve, they are at risk of hypoxemia, hypercarbia and pneumothorax in the perioperative period due to insufficient ventilation of the lung and structural disorders. If there is a bulla in the lung that is ventilated during the operation, the risks increase further. In addition, postoperative mechanical ventilation support may be required when general anesthesia is required for the operation. If the bulge or air cyst is connected with the bronchus, the air gap may be enlarged by positive pressure ventilation. In this case, a significant part of the tidal volume enters the bulla area, alveolar dead space increases, and if the minute volume is not increased at the same rate, hypoventilation occurs.

Although the connection of the bulbs with the bronchial system is poor, the use of nitrous oxide, which expands the closed spaces, should be avoided. In addition, another issue that should be considered is that there may be air increase in the cavity due to a possible “checkvalve” system between the bulla and the airway. In this case, the positive pressure created within the bulla may cause the bulla to burst and pneumothorax. It has been shown that high frequency ventilation applications with low tidal volume are effective in preventing bulla ruptures due to positive pressure.

High frequency ventilation techniques should be used with caution as they can generate high PEEP [42]. Dynamic hyperinflation or pneumo-

thorax should be considered in the event of a sudden deterioration of the hemodynamic state. In addition, it should be kept in mind that patients with emphysema have limited exercise capacity, are elderly patients with a long-term smoking history and risk of coronary artery disease.

Postoperative air leak is an important risk due to lung parenchymal damage, suture line and opening of adjacent lung tissues in COPD patients. Therefore, two main goals are to awaken patients quickly from anesthesia and to provide early extubation. For this, short-acting anesthetic agents should be used, appropriate monitoring, postoperative pain control should be provided, the body temperature of the patient should be kept at normal values. Care should be taken to keep the hemodynamic values in a stable condition and adequate parenteral fluid support should be provided. Ensuring that emphysema patients who are candidates for lung transplantation or volume reduction surgery are fed in an appropriate and sufficient time, is an important part of rehabilitation programs to combat malnutrition [43].

Surgery should be postponed in cases where medical treatment of COPD is insufficient, in the presence of upper respiratory tract infection and acute exacerbation of COPD. Corticosteroids, bronchodilators, prophylactic antibiotics and treatments for deep vein thrombosis prophylaxis administered in the pre-anesthesia period reduce postoperative complications. It has been reported that pre-operative pulmonary rehabilitation increases exercise capacity and accelerates recovery.

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