Nurse led ultrasound guided femoral nerve block in hip fracture patients – a study of task shifting

PhD. Candidate Elin Saga

Hip fracture is associated with acute distinct pain in the proximal part of the affected extremity. Patients who experience severe pain have a higher risk of delirium, as opposed to patients whose pain is adequately treated [1]. Further, delirium is shown to be an independent marker for increased mortality after hospital admission [2]. Therefore, optimizing acute pain assessment and management is important. An ultrasound-guided femoral nerve block performed in hip fracture patients is a valuable alternative to systemic opioid administration [2] and can have favourable patient safety outcomes [5].

Our main hypothesis is that; a single shot ultrasound guided femoral nerve block performed by nurses in the emergency department compared to today’s practice will result in better pain relief first 120 minutes after admission. Therefore, in the emergency department at Vestfold Hospital Trust we are conducting a single center randomized controlled trial comparing standard of care with nurse led ultrasound guided femoral nerve block. Therefore, we also developed a questionnaire presented to the nurses immediately after completed procedure. The trained registered nurses scores how they visualized the anatomical structures, the quality of the spread of local anesthetic, and if they experienced that the patients benefited from the procedure and if the procedure was easy or demanding.

This study has potential to point out a new direction for use of registered nurses and use of ultrasound in point of care interventions.

References