

122. Post-Operative Hallucinations Following Propofol Anaesthesia

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Introduction: Propofol is an anaesthetic agent approved to provide conscious sedation or induce and maintain general anaesthesia. This is an agent of choice in surgical procedures because of its inherent characteristics of inducing smoothly anaesthesia and rapid recovery following prolonged infusion. Adverse neurological effects include especially epileptiform movements with opisthotonos and convulsive seizures. Euphoria and sexual disinhibition on waking phase are also described.

Objective: To alert about a potential neurological side effect of propofol: post-operative hallucinations.

Methods: We report the case of a man who presented hallucinations following anaesthesia with propofol. A 30 year-old man was hospitalised for a cranial trauma associated with an initial loss of consciousness. At admission, he was sedated and on bilateral myosis. An extradural haematoma was detected on cerebral imagery. The next day, he was scheduled for a neurosurgical procedure, an fronto-orbital dish-pan fracture with a regional reconstruction. Anaesthesia protocol consisted on an association of fentanyl, cisatracurium and propofol infusion. Surgery lasted for three hours. Six days later, after a progressive waking, the patient was extubated. He presented no signs of intracranial haematoma or neurological deficit. However, he showed nocturnal confusion episode with visual hallucinations while he was perfectly oriented during the day. He described these hallucinations as pleasant: feeling of glide, vision of the San-Francisco bridge and image of young Indian girls. This episode persisted during three days. The evolution was satisfying and the patient, vigilant and autonomous, was discharged on the 15th postoperative day.

Discussion-Conclusion: An association between propofol anaesthesia and the occurring of hallucinations and dreams following anaesthesia is rarely reported. In the French Pharmacovigilance database, only four cases of hallucinations are collected. In most of cases, these dreams and hallucinations are pleasant, more than those reported with others anaesthetic agents such as thiopental, enflurane or isoflurane. For propofol, these effects are reported in the Physicians' Desk Reference but not still mentioned in the French Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC).