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Comparison of hemoglobin variability between short and intermediate acting erythropoiesis-stimulating agents

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Objectives : This retrospective cohort study aimed to compare the effects of dosing frequency and dosage of epoetin- α/β and darbepoetin- α on hemoglobin variability in patients undergoing maintenance hemodialysis.

Methods : This cohort study included 406 maintenance hemodialysis patients at the hemodialysis unit of Yeungnam University Hospital from January 2010 to December 2015. Finally, we included 119 patients and divided into two groups based to ESA type: those treated with epoetin- α/β (EPO, $n = 48$) and those treated with darbepoetin- α (DPO, $n = 71$). This study evaluated standard deviation (SD), coefficient of variation (CV), and residual standard deviation (residual SD) to quantify Hb variability.

Results : The EPO and DPO groups were generally well-balanced at baseline. Over the 40-week study period with 4-week measurement intervals, the mean hemoglobin levels remained generally comparable between the two groups, and no statistically significant differences in mean hemoglobin levels were observed between the EPO and DPO groups at any time point. Values in EPO and DPO groups were as follows: 0.67 ± 0.19 g/dL and 0.69 ± 0.22 g/dL for SD ($P = 0.516$); 0.06 ± 0.02 % and 0.07 ± 0.02 % for CV ($P = 0.480$); 0.73 ± 0.21 g/dL and 0.76 ± 0.26 g/dL for residual SD ($P = 0.463$). There were no significant difference in intraindividual Hb variability using SD, CV, and residual SD between the two groups. In subgroup analyses stratified by sex, age, ultrafiltration volume, and dosage, most subgroups showed no statistically significant differences in hemoglobin variability indices between the two groups.

Conclusions : This study shows broadly similar mean hemoglobin levels and hemoglobin variability indices. These findings suggest that, in terms of hemoglobin variability, there may be no clear need to prioritize either short-acting or intermediate acting erythropoiesis-stimulating agents.