The Use of Medrol Dosepak For Postop Dysphagia Following ACDF

Stanley Hoang, MD; Endrit Ziu, MD; Fassil Mesfin, MD

Division of Neurosurgery, University of Missouri School of Medicine, Columbia, MO
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Introduction:

Postoperative dysphagia following anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF), especially early in the postoperative course, is believed to be related to the edema resulting from retraction of midline structures during surgery. Recent evidence suggests that steroid administration can decrease swelling and dysphagia by limiting the inflammatory responses. This study examined the use of a quick-taper Medrol dosepak in improving postop dysphagia following ACDF.
Methods:
This is a prospective feasibility pilot study in which patients with swallowing difficulty were given Medrol dosepak upon presentation of symptoms. Swallowing function using a modified Bazaz questionnaire was assessed at 2 weeks and 3 months during clinic follow-up. Retrospective chart review was used to historical controls.
Results:
Preliminary results from 7 patients with dysphagia who were given Medrol Dosepak upon discovery of dysphagia with 2 weeks and 3 months follow up show some difficulties in swallowing food and pills at 2 weeks (Grade 2). Five patients showed resolution of dysphagia at follow up while 2 patients still have some mild swallowing difficulties at 3 months.
Conclusion:
Medrol dosepak given to patients with dysphagia upon presentation of symptoms does appear to provide immediate relief and allow the patient to swallow better. The data from this feasibility study will be used to initiate a study looking at randomization to determine whether Medrol dosepak can improve swallowing function without affecting fusion rate.