Intraoperative Neuromonitoring for Lateral Lumbar Interbody Fusion: An Intraoperative Protocol to Avoid Postoperative Neurologic Deficit

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Background

- **Goals/Advantages**
  - Indirect decompression, deformity correction, interbody fusion
  - Avoid complications with other interbody approaches (ALIF, TLIF/PLIF)

- **Risk** - Neurologic Injury to individual nerves or nerve plexus
  - Intra-operative neuromonitoring
    - EMG, SSEP (Silverstein et al, 2014), MEP (Block et al, 2015)

Intraoperative checklists have been studied and created for spine surgery when neuromonitoring is used (Vitale et al, 2014)

- LLIF is frequently performed with neuromonitoring
  - No consensus on extent of NM modalities

- No checklists or protocol exist for alerts that occur during LLIF procedures
  - Unique/additional potential causes from other surgical approaches

Purpose

- **Primary purpose:** To investigate the utility of neuromonitoring (NM) in LLIF and the development of an intra-operative protocol

- **Secondary purpose:**
  - In depth evaluation of NM alerts: including timing, levels, diagnosis, association with dilator stim
  - Evaluation of Post op deficits (POD) and associated risks
Methods

- Retrospective review of all LLIF cases
  - Single institution
  - 2 experienced LLIF surgeons with 2 neurophysiologists
  - All indications for surgery (degenerative, deformity)
- Study Period: October 2014-October 2016
- Inclusion
  - At least 3 month follow-up
    - 2 year follow-up available
  - No concurrent Interbody (ALIF or PLIF/TLIF)
  - Complete neuromonitoring records
- Data Collection
  - Motor and sensory grading, clinical outcomes: Preop, 1 month and 3 months post op
  - Intra-operative: NM data, dilator stim alerts, Retractor timing (from time of insertion to time of removal from psoas)
- Neuromonitoring
  - NVM5
    - Proprietary monitoring system
    - Used for free run and triggered EMG
  - Cadwell Cascade Pro
    - SSEP
      - Saphenous as femoral nerve surrogate
      - posterior tibial, and ulnar nerve
    - TcMEP
      - adductor magnus, vastus medialis, vastus lateralis, tibialis anterior, and small muscles of the foot
      - Cremaster/mons for genitofemoral
  - Alert = sustained EMG, ↓SSEP 50% and/or 10% latency increase, ↓MEP 50% from baseline
**INTRAOPERATIVE PROTOCOL**

**Evaluation**
- During which part of the procedure
- Type: ischemic, traumatic, anesthetic

**Checklist:** Assess potential causes and solutions
- Retractor time?
- Nerve visualized in field?
- Movement- retractor migration or muscle creep into field?
- Tissue within disc space? (causing bouncing of retractor/instruments during insertion)
- Trial or graft height-stretch
- Bed break-prolonged time with stretch

**Response**
- Based on findings of evaluation and checklist
Results - DEMOGRAPHICS and CLINICAL

Demographics
- 83 patients were included with complete data
- 7 excluded for incomplete follow up
- 76 patients (123 levels) were studied

Clinical Outcomes
- At one month post op only NRS leg showed significant improvement
  - 6.8 → 4.4 (p=0.003)
- By 3 months all three outcome questions saw improvement
  - NRS Back: 7 → 4.7 (p<0.001)
  - NRS leg: 7.1 → 3.4 (p<0.001)
  - ODI: 45.3 → 30.8 (p<0.001)

Demographics
- M:F 43:33
- Mean age 67 ± 12.1
- Avg PSF levels: 2.3 ± 2.4
- Avg interbody levels was 1.6 ±0.9.
- Avg EBL: 193.2 ±312.6 cc
- Avg OR Time 204.2 ±109.2 min

Diagnosis
- Degenerative 46
- Deformity 30

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Results - ALERTS

- 14 (18.4%) had NM alerts triggering the protocol
  - 1 (7%) patient woke up with a POD (sensory and motor)
  - 9/14 (64.2%) had dilator stim threshold <10
- 62 (81.6%) had no alert
  - 37 (59.7%) had dilator stim <10 → 3 (4.8%) with POD (1 sens & 2 motor).
- 4/7 with lateral thigh numbness had alerts
- 5/12 with IP weakness had a NM alert
- Avg time to first alert → 13 min

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuromonitoring Alerts</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>POD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>(both sensory + motor)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilator Stim</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dilator Stim &lt;10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilator Stim &gt;10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilator Stim No Data</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Alerts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSEP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEP</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMG</td>
<td>9</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part where 1st alert occurred</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retractor insertion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc prep</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafting</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
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</table>
Only considered deficit if was not present preop

- 7 (10.9%) patients had POD (3 sensory, 3 motor, 1 both)
  - 50% resolved by 1 month follow-up,
  - 85% resolved by 6 months
  - All resolved within 25 months
  - Patient with both sensory and motor deficit resolved by 25 month follow up

- 9 (11.8%) patients had lateral thigh numbness
  - 78% resolved by 1 month
  - 89% resolved by 6 months
  - All resolved by 16 months

- 12 (15.8%) patients had psoas weakness
  - 10 resolved by 1 month follow up visit (9 resolved by discharge from hospital)
  - 1 lasted >12 weeks
  - 4 had an associated POD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>POD</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Quad (4/5)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Tib Ant (4/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 L2-L5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 L4-S1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>L Quad (3/5)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L IP (3/5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L3</td>
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<td>Lateral Thigh Numbness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psoas Weakness</td>
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<td>Both (M+S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tib Ant (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L2-L5 (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L4-S1 (S)</td>
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Results: Diagnosis and Interbody Fusion

**Diagnosis**
- Patients carrying a *deformity* diagnosis were more likely to have a post operative *sensory deficit*.

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<th>Degenerative</th>
<th>Deformity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensory Deficit</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor Deficit</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.658</td>
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</table>

**Interbody Fusion (IBF)**
- **Number of IBF Levels**
  - When comparing overall POD by level no significant difference was found.
  - A multivariant logistic regression: *postoperative sensory deficit* was 15x more likely with 3 level IBF than in a single level (OR 15.67, CI 1.23, 199.92).
- **Location of IBF**
  - No association with POD
  - Most ALERTS at L3-4
  - ROC curve-Critical retractor time threshold 24.5 minutes.
1. IOM protocol was triggered in 14 patients with only 1 POD
2. Psoas weakness had an association with POD
   • Specifically sensory
3. Deformity cases were more likely to have a sensory deficit
   • 3+ IBF levels had increased risk of sensory deficit
4. No difference in POD by level
5. L3-L4 had higher risk of NM alert
6. Critical retractor time threshold **24.5 minutes** for sensory
Neuromonitoring can be used as an adjunct to help alert potential deficits to trigger an intraoperative checklist.

- 6/7 POD were not associated with an alert highlighting the need to better understand the functional neuroanatomy.