Research Article

Effects of Prone Positioning for Patients with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome Caused by Pulmonary Contusion: A Single-Center Retrospective Study

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Received 7 July 2021; Revised 2 January 2022; Accepted 10 February 2022; Published 31 March 2022

Abstract

Background. The effects of prone positioning (PP) on patients with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) caused by pulmonary contusion (PC) are unclear. We sought to determine the efficacy of PP among patients whose ARDS was caused by PC.

Methods. A retrospective observational study was performed at an intensive care unit (ICU) from January 2017 to June 2021. ARDS patients with PaO2/FiO2 (P/F) < 150 mmHg were enrolled. During the study period, we enrolled 121 patients in the PP group and 117 in the control group. The changes in vital signs, laboratory tests, and compliance of the respiratory system (Crs) were recorded for 3 consecutive days. The mechanical ventilation time, duration of ICU stay, complications, extubation rate, 28-day ventilator-free days, and mortality were also recorded.

Results. In the PP group, the P/F and Crs increased over time. Compared to the control group, the P/F and Crs improved in the PP group over 3 consecutive days (P < 0.05). Furthermore, the PP group also had shorter total mechanical ventilation time (5.1 ± 1.4 vs. 9.3 ± 3.1 days, P < 0.05) and invasive ventilation time (4.9 ± 1.2 vs. 8.7 ± 2.7 days, P < 0.05), shorter ICU stay (7.4 ± 1.8 vs. 11.5 ± 3.6 days, P < 0.05), higher extubation rate (95.6% vs. 84.4%, P < 0.05), less atelectasis (15 vs. 74, P < 0.05), and lower mortality (4.4% vs. 13.3%, P < 0.05).

Conclusions. Among PC cases with moderate to severe ARDS, PP can correct hypoxemia more quickly, improve Crs, reduce atelectasis, increase the extubation rate, shorten mechanical ventilation time and length of ICU stay, and reduce mortality.

1. Introduction

A pulmonary contusion (PC) is a parenchymal injury to the lung caused by an external force (e.g., trauma) either directly or indirectly acting on the chest [1]. It is often accompanied by clinical manifestations, including chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and hemoptysis. Often, in the most critically ill patients, the amount of pulmonary contusion may evolve into a severe acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), i.e., severe hypoxemia, noncardiogenic pulmonary edema, and a decrease in pulmonary compliance. In the context of the current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the safe and effective management of PC patients has become more challenging [2], and the early elimination of COVID-19 can significantly improve the treatment of PC [3]. In recent years, the technical ability to establish a diagnosis of PC early and to predict disease aggravation has been significantly improved [4, 5], and a
variety of clinical studies on the treatment of PC have been proven to be effective [6, 7], significantly reducing the clinical mortality of PC.

Prone positioning (PP) was first proposed as a treatment to improve ventilation in the 1970s [8]. A large number of studies have confirmed that PC can improve hypoxemia and prognosis in patients with ARDS [9, 10], but few reports have discussed PP treatment in patients with ARDS caused by PC [11]. Therefore, we retrospectively analyzed PP in the treatment of patients with ARDS caused by PC to verify the benefits of PP in this type of patient.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Subjects. A retrospective analysis was conducted of 371 PC patients admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Central Hospital of Dazhou, China, from January 2017 to July 2021. In all, 264 patients were screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of these, 136 patients received PP treatment and 128 did not. The total group included 197 males and 67 females, aged from 16 to 74 years old. Upon entry to the ICU, each patient, to receive a diagnosis of PC, was required to exhibit the following indicators: an Acute Physiology and Chronic Health Score (APACHE II) of 12 to 32 points, an Injury Severity Score (ISS) of 14 to 32 points, a platelet count of 159 to $10^9$/L, a hemoglobin value of 82 to 142 g/L, a heart rate (HR) of 87 to 136 beats/min, a mean arterial pressure (MAP) of 62 to 83 mmHg, a respiratory rate (RR) of 17 to 32 beats/min, an arterial blood gas pH of 7.332 to 7.492, an arterial blood carbon dioxide partial pressure ($\text{PaCO}_2$) of 35.6 to 43.8 mmHg, and an oxygenation index (P/F) of 126 to 236 mmHg, as well as a chest X-ray or chest CT scan that allowed a diagnosis of PC.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

2.2.1. Inclusion Criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) ARDS caused by PC treated with invasive mechanical ventilation; (2) diagnosis of ARDS meeting the 2012 Berlin definition of ARDS [12]; (3) the occurrence of moderate to severe ARDS, $\text{P/F} < 150$ mmHg [13]; and (4) an age of 16–75 years old.

2.2.2. Exclusion Criteria. The exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) noninvasive ventilation support performed before orotracheal intubation; (2) previous lung diseases; (3) pelvic, cervical, or spinal fracture or requiring a fixed position; (4) uncontrolled increase in intracranial pressure; (5) open abdominal injury; (6) multiple traumas with unstable fractures; (7) pregnancy; and (8) severe hemodynamic instability (mean arterial blood pressure $< 60$ mmHg or systolic blood pressure $> 200$ mmHg) [14].

2.3. Grouping. The 335 PC patients admitted to the ICU were screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and 264 cases were included in the study. The included cases were divided into a PP group ($n = 136$) and a control group ($n = 128$) (Figure 1) according to whether they were treated with PP to alleviate severe hypoxemia when the P/F was lower than 150 mmHg [13, 15]. The treatment of the patients followed the ARDS treatment principle [13]. First, bromhexine hydrochloride was injected (4 mg three times a day, intravenous drip) as an expectorant. Then, tanreqing was injected (40 mL once a day, intravenous drip) to clear away heat and resolve phlegm. Next, select antibiotics were administered to fight infection according to the results of pathogenic microorganism culture and the antibacterial spectrum. Fourth, sufentanil citrate was injected (0.2 $\mu$g/[kg•h], intravenous pumping) as an anesthesia. Fifth, midazolam was injected (0.3 $\mu$g/[kg•h], intravenous pumping) as a sedative. Sixth, the patient was fed with full-tube nutrition support. Next, we determined the appropriate mechanical ventilation strategy with low tidal volume lung protective ventilation (LTVA), and the positive-end expiratory pressure (PEEP) and inspiratory oxygen fraction ($\text{FiO}_2$) values (lower PEEP/higher $\text{FiO}_2$) according to the ARDSnet protocol [16–18]. Finally, lung recruitment was conducted with pressure-controlled ventilation using a recruiting maneuver [19]. Other treatments such as using vibration to release sputum, bronchoscopy, maintenance of internal environment stability, prophylactic noninvasive ventilation immediately after extubation, and intensive care were performed when necessary. The ventilator was adjusted according to the arterial blood gas results until the patient was evacuated from the ventilator. In controls, the arterial blood gas was collected in the supine position, and in the PP group, it was collected in the supine position after the end of PP. Before measuring the compliance of the respiratory system (Crs) in both groups, we confirmed adequate sedation and restrained the patients from breathing spontaneously. When analgesia and tranquilizers did not effectively inhibit spontaneous respiration or were limited by negative hemodynamic effects, short-acting neuromuscular blockers were used, if necessary, as standard measurement indicators. In the PP group, when the P/F was lower than 150 mmHg, PP was used to treat patients with severe hypoxemia until the P/F > 200 mmHg could be sustained and then the PP treatment was stopped; the PP time was 12–16 h/day [16]. During PP, patients with chest and abdomen trauma were bound and fixed with medical chest straps, and the area surrounding the trauma was raised using a water bag such that the traumatic site could be elevated. Changes in arterial blood gas and Crs were observed for 3 consecutive days after enrollment in the two groups. Three days after enrollment, a chest CT was performed to assess atelectasis [13]. The statistics for the total mechanical ventilation time (including invasive ventilation time and noninvasive ventilation time), invasive ventilation time, noninvasive ventilation time, ICU stay, atelectasis, pneumothorax, extubation rate, and mortality of the two groups were collected.

2.4. Ethics. Informed consent was obtained from the patients or their family members following medical regulations and routines. Our ethics committee reviewed and approved the study protocol (No. 20200010).
2.5. Statistical Analyses. SPSS 22.0 statistical software was used for statistical analyses. The measurement data were tested using a t-test and are expressed as means ± standard deviations. Categorical variables were tested using chi-square tests. The independent risk factors related to death were analyzed using multivariate logistic regression. P < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1. Patient Characteristics. There were no statistically significant differences in basic information between the two groups of patients upon entry to the ICU in terms of age, gender, APACHE II score, ISS, basic diseases, combined trauma site, complications, vital signs, or laboratory examinations (Table 1). The average stay in the ICU before the PP treatment of the PP group was (10.1 ± 3.5) h.

3.2. Changes in Arterial Blood Gas and Crs. At enrollment, there were no significant differences in arterial blood gas results (pH, PaCO₂, P/F, FiO₂) or Crs between the two groups. One day later, these parameters for controls were not statistically different compared to day 1. However, P/F (125.8 ± 15.6 vs. 208.9 ± 23.1 mmHg, P < 0.05) and Crs (64.7 ± 4.8 vs. 75.8 ± 5.4 mL/cmH₂O, P < 0.05) significantly increased and FiO₂ (0.99 ± 0.04 vs. 0.78 ± 0.08, P < 0.05) decreased in the PP group; pH and PaCO₂ did not significantly change. There were significant differences in P/F and Crs that remained higher and FiO₂ lower in the PP group than in controls for all 3 consecutive days following enrollment (Figure 2), but the differences in pH and PaCO₂ were not statistically significant (Table 2).

3.3. Independent Risk Factors Associated with Death. Multivariate logistic regression analysis of independent risk factors was performed for death on gender, age, ISS score, APACHE II score, platelets, hemoglobin, basic diseases, arterial blood gas at ICU entry, arterial blood gas when enrolled in the study, and PP. PP was found to be a protective factor (odds ratio = 0.004, 95% CI: 0.00–0.11; Table 3).

3.4. Outcomes. After 3 days of enrollment, chest CT showed an increase in the incidence of pneumothorax and atelectasis in the two groups, but the incidences of both were lower in the PP group than in the control group. A comparison of the two groups of patients after treatment showed that the PP group had shortened total mechanical
ventilation time, invasive ventilation time, and noninvasive ventilation time, shorter ICU stay, fewer patients on prophylactic noninvasive ventilation after extubation, higher extubation rate, more 28-day ventilator-free days, as well as lower mortality. With the exception of that for pneumothorax, the differences in all observation indicators were statistically significant (Table 4).

**Table 1: Demographic, clinical, and laboratory findings upon entry to the ICU.**

|                          | Total (n = 264) | PP (n = 136) | Control (n = 128) | Difference (95% CI) | P value |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Age, years               | 54.7 ± 14.8    | 54.1 ± 16.3  | 55.3 ± 13.1       | 1.2 (−2.4, 4.8)     | 0.499   |
| Gender                   |                |              |                   |                     |         |
| Female                   | 67 (25.4%)     | 35 (25.7%)   | 32 (25.0%)        | —                   | 0.891   |
| Male                     | 197 (74.6%)    | 101 (74.3%)  | 96 (75.0%)        | —                   | 0.891   |
| APACHE II score          | 21.9 ± 3.2     | 22.2 ± 2.8   | 21.6 ± 3.6        | −0.6 (−1.4, 0.2)    | 0.129   |
| ISS score                | 20.5 ± 3.8     | 20.5 ± 4.0   | 20.4 ± 3.6        | −0.0 (−1.0, 0.9)    | 0.957   |
| Basic diseases           |                |              |                   |                     |         |
| Hypertension             | 16 (6.1%)      | 10 (7.4%)    | 6 (4.7%)          | —                   | 0.364   |
| Diabetes                 | 31 (11.7%)     | 17 (12.5%)   | 14 (10.9%)        | —                   | 0.693   |
| Chronic renal insufficiency | 7 (2.7%)   | 3 (2.2%)     | 4 (3.1%)          | —                   | 0.642   |
| Chronic liver insufficiency | 8 (3.0%)  | 5 (3.7%)     | 3 (2.3%)          | —                   | 0.528   |
| Combined trauma site     |                |              |                   |                     |         |
| Head                     | 79 (29.9%)     | 41 (30.2%)   | 38 (29.7%)        | —                   | 0.935   |
| Chest                    | 197 (74.6%)    | 101 (74.3%)  | 96 (75.0%)        | —                   | 0.891   |
| Abdomen                  | 64 (24.2%)     | 36 (26.5%)   | 28 (21.9%)        | —                   | 0.384   |
| Limbs                    | 78 (29.6%)     | 37 (27.2%)   | 41 (32.0%)        | —                   | 0.390   |
| Clinical complications   |                |              |                   |                     |         |
| Pulmonary hemorrhage     | 24 (9.1%)      | 13 (9.6%)    | 11 (8.6%)         | —                   | 0.785   |
| Pneumothorax             | 25 (9.5%)      | 15 (11.0%)   | 10 (7.8%)         | —                   | 0.372   |
| Atelectasis              | 12 (4.6%)      | 7 (5.2%)     | 5 (3.9%)          | —                   | 0.629   |
| Heart rate, beats/min    | 113.6 ± 9.8    | 114.4 ± 9.6  | 112.7 ± 9.9       | −1.8 (−4.1, 0.6)    | 0.146   |
| MAP, mmHg                | 71.1 ± 4.9     | 71.5 ± 4.9   | 70.7 ± 4.8        | −0.9 (−2.1, 0.3)    | 0.147   |
| Respiratory rate, breaths/min | 23.2 ± 3.8     | 23.1 ± 3.9  | 23.3 ± 3.6        | 0.2 (−0.8, 1.1)     | 0.736   |
| Hb, g/L                  | 118.7 ± 13.0   | 118.3 ± 13.5 | 119.1 ± 12.6     | 0.9 (−2.3, 4.1)     | 0.576   |
| Platelet count, 10^9/L   | 218.0 ± 24.0   | 219.8 ± 21.4 | 216.1 ± 26.4     | −3.68 (−9.49, 2.12) | 0.213   |
| pH                       | 7.44 ± 0.05    | 7.44 ± 0.05  | 7.44 ± 0.05       | 0.00 (−0.01, 0.01)  | 0.883   |
| PaCO2, mmHg              | 40.2 ± 2.0     | 40.7 ± 1.7   | 39.7 ± 2.1        | −0.97 (−1.44, −0.50) | 0.107   |
| P/F, mmHg                | 172.5 ± 27.1   | 171.6 ± 26.5 | 173.3 ± 27.9     | 1.67 (−4.91, 8.26)  | 0.617   |
| FiO2                     | 0.5 ± 0.1      | 0.5 ± 0.1    | 0.5 ± 0.1         | 0.09 (−0.01, 0.03)  | 0.299   |

APACHE II, acute physiology and chronic health evaluation II; CI, confidence interval; FiO2, inspiratory oxygen fraction; Hb, hemoglobin; ISS, injury severe score; MAP, mean arterial pressure; PaCO2, arterial partial pressure of carbon dioxide; P/F, partial pressure of oxygen in arterial blood/fraction of inspired oxygen; PP, prone position.

Figure 2: Changes in compliance of the respiratory system and PaO2/FiO2. (a) Trend of change in compliance of the respiratory system; (b) trend of change in PaO2/FiO2.

4. Discussion

PC is always followed by an accumulation of interstitial fluid and decreased alveolar membrane diffusion function, which may lead to ARDS [20]. Studies have shown that ARDS is an important factor leading to the late clinical death of PC patients [5, 21]. PP is an effective measure for the treatment...
Table 2: Changes in arterial blood gas and Crs.

|                      | PP (n = 136) | Control (n = 128) | Difference (95% CI) | P value |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|
| When enrolled in the study |              |                    |                     |         |
| pH                   | 7.44 ± 0.05  | 7.44 ± 0.04       | 0.00 (−0.11, 0.01)  | 0.559   |
| PaCO₂, mmHg          | 38.4 ± 1.7   | 39.1 ± 1.9        | 0.7 (0.3, 1.2)      | 0.163   |
| P/F, mmHg            | 125.8 ± 15.6*| 121.9 ± 18.1      | −3.9 (−8.0, 0.2)    | 0.061   |
| FiO₂                 | 0.99 ± 0.04  | 0.98 ± 0.06       | −0.008 (−0.020, 0.004) | 0.198   |
| Crs, mL/cmH₂O        | 64.7 ± 4.8   | 63.7 ± 5.0        | −1.0 (−2.2, 0.2)    | 0.109   |
| 1 day after enrollment |              |                    |                     |         |
| pH                   | 7.43 ± 0.05  | 7.44 ± 0.05       | 0.01 (−0.00, 0.01)  | 0.199   |
| PaCO₂, mmHg          | 39.3 ± 1.4   | 39.2 ± 1.4        | −0.1 (−0.4, 0.3)    | 0.959   |
| P/F, mmHg            | 208.9 ± 23.1 | 125.0 ± 19.2      | −80.87 (−89.04, −78.71) | <0.001*|
| FiO₂                 | 0.78 ± 0.08  | 0.98 ± 0.05       | 0.195 (0.179, 0.212) | <0.001*|
| Crs, mL/cmH₂O        | 75.8 ± 5.4   | 63.4 ± 5.5        | −12.5 (−13.8, −11.1) | <0.001*|
| 2 days after enrollment |            |                    |                     |         |
| pH                   | 7.43 ± 0.05  | 7.45 ± 0.04       | 0.02 (0.01, 0.03)   | 0.377   |
| PaCO₂, mmHg          | 39.4 ± 1.4   | 39.2 ± 1.5        | −0.2 (−0.6, 0.2)    | 0.394   |
| P/F, mmHg            | 222.6 ± 30.8 | 136.7 ± 24.1      | −85.9 (−92.6, −79.2) | <0.001*|
| FiO₂                 | 0.58 ± 0.09  | 0.95 ± 0.09       | 0.367 (0.346, 0.389) | <0.001*|
| Crs, mL/cmH₂O        | 77.6 ± 5.3   | 64.2 ± 7.8        | −13.4 (−14.9, −11.9) | <0.001*|
| 3 days after enrollment |        |                    |                     |         |
| pH                   | 7.43 ± 0.05  | 7.45 ± 0.04       | 0.02 (0.01, 0.03)   | 0.684   |
| PaCO₂, mmHg          | 39.3 ± 1.3   | 39.5 ± 1.4        | 0.02 (−0.31, 0.35)  | 0.282   |
| P/F, mmHg            | 245.4 ± 30.9 | 152.2 ± 28.6      | −93.3 (−100.5, −86.1) | <0.001*|
| FiO₂                 | 0.51 ± 0.1   | 0.79 ± 0.17       | 0.284 (0.250, 0.317) | <0.001*|
| Crs, mL/cmH₂O        | 78.1 ± 5.3   | 66.1 ± 7.6        | −11.9 (−13.6, −10.4) | <0.001*|

Crs, compliance of the respiratory system; CI, confidence interval; FiO₂, inspiratory oxygen fraction; PaCO₂, arterial partial pressure of carbon dioxide; P/F, partial pressure of oxygen in arterial blood/fraction of inspired oxygen; PP, prone position. *P < 0.05 for patients with versus without PP. 1 cmH₂O = 0.098 kPa.

Table 3: Independent risk factors associated with death in hospital identified by multivariate logistic regression analysis.

| Risk factors | OR (95% CI)        | P value |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|
| ISS score    | 3.014 (1.68, 5.40) | <0.001* |
| PP           | 0.004 (0.00, 0.11) | 0.001*  |
| P/F when enrolled in the study, mmHg | 0.907 (0.84, 0.98) | 0.009*  |

CI, confidence interval; ISS, injury severe score; OR, odds ratio; P/F, partial pressure of oxygen in arterial blood/fraction of inspired oxygen; PP, prone position. *P < 0.05 for patients with versus without PP.

Table 4: Outcomes of mechanical ventilation, ICU stay, clinical complications, and mortality.

|                              | Total (n = 264) | PP (n = 136) | Control (n = 128) | Difference (95% CI) | P value |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Total mechanical ventilation time*, days | 7.1 ± 3.2 | 5.1 ± 1.4 | 9.3 ± 3.1 | 4.2 (3.6, 4.8) | <0.001* |
| Invasive ventilation time, days | 6.8 ± 2.8 | 4.9 ± 1.2 | 8.7 ± 2.7 | 3.8 (3.3, 4.3) | <0.001* |
| Number of prophylactic noninvasive ventilations after extubation | 52 (19.7%) | 19 (14.0%) | 33 (25.8%) | — | 0.016* |
| Noninvasive ventilation time, days | 0.4 ± 0.8 | 0.2 ± 0.5 | 0.5 ± 0.9 | 0.3 (0.1, 0.5) | 0.001* |
| Extubation rate, % | 238 (90.2%) | 130 (95.6%) | 108 (84.4%) | — | 0.002* |
| 28-day ventilator-free, days | 19.0 ± 6.8 | 21.6 ± 5.2 | 16.2 ± 7.2 | −5.4 (−7.0, −3.9) | <0.001* |
| ICU stay time before enrollment, hours | 10.6 ± 3.8 | 10.1 ± 3.5 | 11.2 ± 4.0 | 1.1 (0.2, 2.0) | 0.157 |
| PP time, days | 1.5 ± 1.7 | 3.0 ± 1.1 | 0 | 3.0 (2.8, 3.2) | <0.001* |
| ICU stay time, days | 9.4 ± 3.5 | 7.4 ± 1.8 | 11.5 ± 3.6 | 4.2 (3.5, 4.8) | <0.001* |
| Clinical complications (3 days after enrollment) |              |            |                   |                     |         |
| Pneumothorax               | 41 (15.5%) | 17 (12.5%) | 24 (18.8%) | — | 0.161 |
| Atelectasis                | 90 (34.1%) | 15 (11.0%) | 74 (57.8%) | — | <0.001* |
| Mortality, %               | 23 (7.7%)  | 6 (4.4%)   | 17 (13.3%) | — | 0.011* |

CI, confidence interval; ICU, intensive care unit; PP, prone position. *Total mechanical ventilation time includes the time of invasive and noninvasive mechanical ventilation. *P < 0.05 for patients with versus without PP.
of ARDS, but there has not yet been a clinical study on the
efficacy of PP in the treatment of ARDS caused by PC. In our
clinical study, we found that PP can safely be used in patients
with ARDS caused by PC, as it improves hypoxemia and Crs
and has a positive effect on the outcome of treatment.

Most PC patients show chest and abdomen trauma,
which increases the difficulty of PP implementation and the
risk of complications, limiting the clinical implementation of
PP. Therefore, there has been no clinical research on PP
treatment of patients with PC after ARDS. We used elastic
chest straps to address the wounds of our patients to prevent
secondary injuries caused by wound dehiscence during PP.
At the same time, the surrounding area of the wound was
raised using water bags to elevate the injured part and avoid
sores caused by prolonged pressure. Our results showed that
the trauma sites were not aggravated and did not acquire
pressure sores during PP in the PP group, confirming that
this procedure can be safely used in the clinical treatment of
PC patients with ARDS.

Our retrospective analysis found that the P/F and Crs
significantly increased and FiO2 decreased in the PP group
after 1 day of treatment, and the clinical indicators con-
tinued to improve over 3 consecutive days. At an average of
3.0 ± 1.1 days after PP treatment, P/F > 200 mmHg could be
continuously maintained, and the clinical effect was better
than that for the control group. PP can change gravity-
dependent lung areas by changing the body position, im-
proving the ventilation/blood flow ratios of patients with
moderate to severe ARDS, improving Crs, and quickly
correcting early hypoxemia.

PC patients often develop pulmonary ARDS, showing
poor lung recruitment and poor response to conventional
lung recruitment techniques, resulting in a high incidence of
atelectasis [22]. In this study, we used chest CT to assess
atelectasis, the incidence of which was 57.8% in the control
group and only 11.0% in the PP group 3 days after en-
rollment. PP changes the gravity-dependent area of the lung,
which can prevent consolidation of such areas in ARDS
patients; this has the effect of continuous lung opening to
achieve lung recruitment and reduce the occurrence of at-
electasis during the treatment process. The use of LTV for
mechanical ventilation can reduce the risk of barotrauma.

Studies have shown that PP treatment can improve
hypoxia and Crs while also controlling inflammatory factors
in the lungs [23]. In our study, the PP group had a shorter
total mechanical ventilation time, invasive ventilation time,
and noninvasive ventilation time; a higher extubation rate;
lower (14%) patients receiving prophylactic noninvasive
ventilation after extubation; shorter ICU stay; and a lower
mortality rate. The most plausible explanation is that PP
quickly corrected the patient’s hypoxemia and reduced the
ventilator-related lung damage and release of proin-
flammatory cytokines, the time of tracheal intubation, and
the risk of exposure to ventilator-associated pneumonia. At
the same time, the postural drainage of PP has a certain
airway clearance effect and partly reduces the risk of disease
deterioration. Therefore, the patients in the PP group had
shorter mechanical ventilation time, a higher extubation
rate, and fewer patients with prophylactic noninvasive
ventilation after extubation than those without PP treat-
ment. PP treatment also increased the number of 28-day
ventilator-free days and reduced the mortality rate. In sum,
PP had a positive effect on the treatment of patients with
ARDS caused by PC.

There have been many studies on PP and its performance
for the treatment of critical ARDS, in which it has been
shown that the clinical efficacy is affected by multiple factors
[24]. In our study, better curative effects were observed for
the patients in the PP group. The possible reasons for this
include the absence of lung infection in early ARDS caused
by PC, which is generally a low-inflammation type of ARDS
that responds well to PP treatment.

This study had several limitations. First, it was a clinical
retrospective study of ARDS caused by PC, and its retro-
spective nature is a potential cause for bias. However, we
conducted a multivariate logistic regression analysis of in-
dependent risk factors for death, which showed that PP can
affect treatment outcomes. Second, the subjects were ICU
patients with severe disease, and their treatment measures
were complex. Third, the sample size was small, the data
collection was relatively simple, and the retrospective design
only provided low-quality evidence. Therefore, a random-
ized controlled trial with larger samples is required to
provide high-quality evidence.

5. Conclusions

For patients showing PC with ARDS (P/F < 150 mmHg), PP
can change the gravity-dependent area of the lung, thereby
improving lung ventilation/blood flow ratios, correcting
early hypoxemia in a timely fashion, and improving Crs. It
can also reduce the occurrence of atelectasis, increase the
extubation rate, shorten the duration of mechanical venti-
lation and ICU stay, increase the number of 28-day venti-
lator-free days, and reduce mortality rates, while
maintaining the safety required for clinical application.

Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description                      |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| APACHE II    | Acute Physiology and Chronic Health II |
| ARDS         | Acute respiratory distress syndrome |
| Crs          | Compliance of respiratory system  |
| CI           | Confidence interval               |
| FiO2         | Inspiratory oxygen fraction       |
| Hb           | Hemoglobin                        |
| ICU          | Intensive care unit               |
| ISS          | Injury severe score               |
| LTV          | Low tidal volume lung protective ventilation |
| MAP          | Mean arterial pressure            |
| OR           | Odds ratio                        |
| PaO2         | Arterial partial pressure of oxygen |
| PaCO2        | Arterial partial pressure of carbon dioxide |
| PC           | Pulmonary contusion               |
| PEEP         | Positive-end expiratory pressure  |
| P/F          | Partial pressure of oxygen in arterial blood/ fraction of inspired oxygen |
| PP           | Prone positioning                 |
Data Availability

The data are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Central Hospital of Dazhou (No. 2020010).

Consent

Informed consent was obtained from the patients or their family members in accordance with medical regulations and routines.

Disclosure

Xiaoyi Liu and Hui Liu are co-first authors.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors’ Contributions

XL and XZ conceived and designed the study, had full access to all the data, and took responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analyses. XL and HL drafted the paper. XL, HL, SL, WZ, JD, XZ, XL, and QL collected the data and conducted the analyses. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work. All authors critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content and gave final approval for this version to be published. Liu Xiaoyi and Liu Hui contributed equally to the study.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to all the study participants. The authors also thank International Edit for editing the English and the Dean of the hospital, who provided a working platform.

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