Second trimester termination of pregnancy with misoprostol alone and misoprostol with isosorbide mononitrate: a comparative study

Pinkee Saxena1*, Neha Jaiswal1, Shashi Lata Kabra1, Vijay K. Kadam1, Vidushi Saxena2

1Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, New Delhi, India
2Hamdard Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, New Delhi, India

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*Correspondence:
Dr. Pinkee Saxena,
E-mail: drpinkee@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Aim of the study was to compare the efficacy of misoprostol alone and misoprostol with isosorbide mononitrate in reducing the induction abortion time interval in second trimester termination of pregnancy.

Methods: A randomized control prospective study was conducted. Patients seeking second trimester abortions were randomized in to two groups. Group A received 400 ugm of misoprostol per vaginum every 4 hours up to maximum of 5 doses. Group B patients received 400 ugm of misoprostol and 40mg of isosorbide nitrate intravaginally. Repeat dose of 400 ugm misoprostol and 20 mg of isosorbide mononitrate was given every 4 hours up to a maximum of 5 doses. The induction to abortion interval and side effects of the drugs used were noted.

Results: A total 71 women seeking second trimester termination between 12 to 20 weeks gestation were recruited for the study. In group A, there were 36 patients and in group B there were 35 patients. In group A the mean induction abortion interval was 14.8±4.16 hours while in group B the mean induction-abortion interval was 12.45±3.9 hours. Patients treated with isosorbide mononitrate and misoprostol combination had statistically significantly lower induction abortion time interval when compared with misoprostol alone (p value 0.018).

Conclusions: The study demonstrates that the combination of isosorbide mononitrate and misoprostol is more effective for termination of second trimester pregnancy than misoprostol alone.

Keyword: Isosorbide mononitrate, Misoprostol, Second trimester, Abortion

INTRODUCTION

Second trimester abortion accounts for 10 to 15% of all induced abortions and is responsible for two thirds of all abortion related complications.1 In past, surgical methods were commonly practiced for termination of pregnancy. Nowadays with the availability of effective uterotonic drugs like prostaglandins and its analogue, medical termination of pregnancy is preferred. Misoprostol is commonly used for termination of pregnancy in second trimester.2 Drugs like mifepristone1 have been combined with it to reduce the induction abortion interval and improve outcome.3 Mifepristone has shown to be effective but it is expensive and may not be available at times.

Cervical ripening is an important prerequisite for the successful termination of a pregnancy. Nitric oxide donors like isosorbide mononitrate have been used as cervical ripening agents in first trimester and for induction of labour at term in the past.4,6

Nitric oxide donors induce production of matrix metalloproteinases namely MMP-1 and MMP-9, which are essential for collagen degradation.7 It also increases proinflammatory cytokines and prostaglandins. The use of these agents for second trimester termination of pregnancies can shorten the induction abortion delivery time. This study aims to evaluate the efficacy of isosorbide mononitrate in combination with misoprostol.
in shortening the induction to abortion interval in
termination of pregnancy in second trimester.

RESULTS

A total 71 women seeking mid trimester termination
between 12 to 20 weeks gestation were recruited for the
study. In group A, there were 36 patients and in group B
there were 35 patients. Clinical characteristic of the two
groups is given in Table 1. Both the groups were found to
be similar in their clinical characteristics. The indications
for termination of pregnancy are summarized in Table 2.
The most common indication for termination of
pregnancy was missed abortion, 50% in group A and
51.4% in group B respectively.

Table 1: Clinical characteristics of the two study
groups.

| Variables               | Group A (years) | Group B (years) | P  |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----|
| Age                     | 27±5.66         | 26.37±5.63      | 0.64|
| Nullipara               | 14              | 15              | 0.81|
| Multipara               | 22              | 20              | 0.81|
| Gestational age (weeks) | 15.91±2.27      | 16.68±2.33      | 0.16|

Table 2: Indications for second trimester termination
of pregnancy.

| Indications              | Group (%) | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------|
|                         | A  | B     |      |
| Anomalous baby           | 3  | 3     | 65   |
| Missed abortion          | 18 | 18    | 36   |
| PPROM                    | 2  | 2     | 3    |
| Anhydramnios             | 2  | 4     | 6    |
| Contraceptive failure    | 10 | 7     | 17   |
| Social cause             | 2  | 1     | 3    |
| Total                    | 36 | 35    | 71   |

In group A the mean induction abortion interval was
14.8±4.16 hours while in group B the mean induction
abortion interval was 12.45±3.9 hours. Patients treated
with isosorbide mononitrate and misoprostol combination
had statistically significantly lower induction abortion
time interval when compared with misoprostol alone (p
value-0.018). On comparing the mean induction abortion
time interval in nullipara and multipara within each group
it was observed that time taken for complete abortion was
statistically insignificant. In group A the mean induction
abortion interval was 15.08±4.76 hours in nullipara and
14.20±3.75 hours in multipara, p value-0.27. In group B
the mean induction abortion interval was 13.26±4.04
hours in nullipara and 11.85±3.83 hours in multipara, p
value-0.29.

In the study the total dose of misoprostol administered to
patients in group A was 1488.88±577.79 ugm and group
B was 1268.27±381.76 ugm. Combined group required
lower dose of misoprostol which was statistically
significant (p value 0.017). 97.1% patients in group A
and 100% patients in group B aborted completely after

METHODS

A prospective, randomized, comparative study was
conducted in the department of obstetrics and
gynaecology at Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital, New
Delhi. Patients requiring second trimester termination
of pregnancy were recruited for the study. Inclusion criteria
were singleton pregnancy between 12 to 20 weeks and
requiring termination of pregnancy. Exclusion criteria
were multiple gestations, previous uterine incision
(caesarean section, myomectomy), patients in the process
of abortion, genital infections and any underlying medical
conditions like cardiac disease, diabetes mellitus or any
known maternal allergy to prostaglandins or nitrates. The
pregnant women who fulfilled the required criteria and
were willing to participate in the study were recruited for
the study. Ethical committee clearance was taken for the
study. After counselling, a written informed consent was
taken from all the patients. A detailed history was taken
and a complete clinical examination was done for all
patients. Routine investigations like haemoglobin, blood
grouping and ultrasound to note the gestational age were
done. The patients were randomized into two groups,
group A and group B by closed envelope method.
Patients in group A received 400 ugm of misoprostol per
vaginum every 4 hours up to maximum of 5 doses. Group
B patients received 400 ugm of misoprostol and 40mg of
isosorbide nitrate intravaginally. Repeat dose of 400 ugm
misoprostol and 20 mg of isosorbide mononitrate was
given every 4 hours up to a maximum of 5 doses. The
induction to abortion time interval, the dose of drug
required for complete abortion, the need for additional
procedures for incomplete /failure of abortion and the
side effects of the drugs used were noted.

Our estimated sample size was based on induction to
abortion interval. In a previous study using a similar
protocol the abortion interval was 20.4 hrs in group 1 and
12.4 hrs in group 2. Thus a sample size of 33 patients per
group with an effect size of 0.8 and 90% power for
detecting a mean difference of 8 hrs in induction to
abortion interval between any two groups at an alpha
level of 0.05. In this study total of 71 patients were taken.
Statistical testing was conducted with the statistical
data was performed using ANOVA with appropriate post hoc test for
and Fisher’s exact test as appropriate. For all statistical
Comparisons of groups. Nominal categorical data
between the groups was compared using Chi-squared test
test results, a p value less than 0.05 was taken to indicate a
significant difference.
induction with drugs. In group A one patient (2.85%) failed to abort completely after receiving five doses of the drug.

Difference in hemoglobin levels post abortion was 1.3±1.57 mg/ml in group A and 1.39±0.39 mg/ml in group B which was statistically insignificant (p value-0.79).

Pain was the most common side effect noted in both the groups as seen in the Table 3. Other side effects noted were fever and diarrhea. None of the side effects specific to nitrates was observed in our patients.

Table 3: Side effects.

| Side effects | Group A (36) | Group B (35) | Total |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Pain         | 28          | 20          | 48    |
| Diarrhoea    | 1           | 0           | 1     |
| Fever        | 2           | 1           | 3     |
| Headache     | 0           | 0           | 0     |
| Palpitation  | 0           | 0           | 0     |

DISCUSSION

Second trimester abortions are painful and stressful procedures. Misoprostol is currently used for termination of pregnancy in second trimester alone or with mifepristone. Combining misoprostol with other drugs helps to reduce the abortion induction time interval.

Nitric oxide donors like isosorbide mononitrate aids in the cervical ripening. Nitric oxide acts on the collagen tissue and induces production of prostaglandins and other mediators of inflammation. This leads to softening of the cervical tissue locally and can aid in decreasing the induction abortion interval in patients seeking second trimester abortions.

We studied the effect of combination of misoprostol and isosorbide mononitrate on second trimester abortion. The mean duration between induction to abortion was 14.8±4.16 hours in group A and 12.45±3.9 hours in group B respectively (p value-0.018). This reduced induction abortion time interval in group B was due to the added effect of isosorbide mononitrate on cervical ripening.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Mousiolis et al the mean duration for complete abortion was 20.4 hours (95%CI =16.63-24.17) for women in misoprostol group compared with 12.4 hours (95% CI=10.33-14.47) in women receiving misoprostol plus isosorbide mononitrate. The p value (p<0.05) was statistically significant. Shanthi Sivakumar et al in their study reported that the mean time taken for complete abortion in misoprostol group was 9 hours 55 minutes (±4 hours 42 minutes) whereas it was 7 hours 36 minutes (±3 hours 11 minutes) in misoprostol plus isosorbide mononitrate group. This difference was statistically significant. They had given mifepristone to all their patients. This may be the reason for reduced induction abortion interval seen in their study compared to ours. Eppel et al in their study found that gemeprost when combined with 40 mg isosorbide mononitrate resulted in higher abortion rate than gemeprost alone. Combination group had success rate of 68% where as gemeprost only group had a success rate of 38%.

In the study conducted by Mousiolis et al the mean induction abortion interval in nulliparas was 22.3 hours in misoprostol group in contrast to 15 hours in misoprostol plus isosorbide mononitrate group (p value 0.005). The mean time elapsed for multiparas in misoprostol group was 18.3 hours in contrast to 9.8 hours in misoprostol plus isosorbide mononitrate group. This difference was also statistically significant. This may be due to alterations in cervical compliance that is observed between primigravida and multigravida women. In our study the mean abortion time observed in nullipara was more than multipara within each group, but it was statistically insignificant.

Headache and palpitations have been reported with isosorbide mononitrate. Our patients did not complain of headache or palpitations. This may be due to first pass effect of vaginally administered isosorbide mononitrate. Similarly, Mousiolis et al also did not report any side effect attributed specifically to nitrates.

CONCLUSION

Our study concludes that misoprostol plus isosorbide mononitrate is more effective in reducing the induction abortion time interval than misoprostol alone. This combination is a safe, effective and relatively inexpensive means of performing mid trimester termination of pregnancy.

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