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## THÈSE

pour le

### DIPLÔME D'ÉTAT DE DOCTEUR EN MÉDECINE

Qualification en ANESTHÉSIE-REANIMATION

# Procédures TAVI sous analgo-sédation : Evaluation de l'intérêt du TAP block associé à l'anesthésie locale

Une étude rétrospective sur 191 patients

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Sous la direction de M. le Docteur Emmanuel RINEAU

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« Léa, elle est parisienne, est pas présentable elle est pas jolie... »,

Tu sais la suite.

## Liste des abréviations

ACT	Activated Clotting Time
AVR	Aortic Valve Replacement
DVT	Deep Vein Thrombosis
GA	General Anesthesia
HF	Heart Frequency
LA	Local Anesthesia
MAP	Mean Arterial Pressure
NRS	Numerical Rating Scale of pain
NSAI	Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory
PACU	Post-Anesthesia Care Unit
PE	Pulmonary Embolism
RA	Regional Anesthesia
SpO2	Pulsed Oxygen Saturation
TAP	Transversus Abdominis Plane-block
TAVI	Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation

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## INTRODUCTION

Les remplacements valvulaires aortiques par voie percutanée (TAVI) sont de plus en plus fréquents. On constate une augmentation de plus de 50% des procédures TAVI entre 2015 et 2017 avec 11 000 implantations en France pour cette dernière année, tandis que le nombre de remplacements valvulaires aortiques (RVA) par voie chirurgicale reste globalement stable (1).

Le vieillissement de la population et l'élargissement des indications expliquent en partie cette augmentation. En effet, si la TAVI est actuellement proposée aux patients ayant un risque modéré à sévère de mortalité périopératoire, deux essais randomisés multicentriques ont montré récemment son intérêt potentiel chez les patients à faible risque chirurgical (2-4). Ils ne retrouvaient pas de différence significative entre TAVI et RVA chirurgical, sur les accidents vasculaires cérébraux ischémiques et la mortalité à 12 et 24 mois ainsi que sur la réhospitalisation à 1 an.

L'abord par voie transfémorale est le plus fréquent pour les TAVI, et les pratiques anesthésiques sont variées (1,5). La sédation associée à une anesthésie locale ou locorégionale est de plus en plus utilisée et est le mode privilégié dans un grand nombre de centres (5). En comparaison avec l'anesthésie générale, la sédation pourrait apporter un bénéfice sur le temps de procédure et la durée de séjour, et diminuer le recours aux amines, sans augmenter la mortalité intra-hospitalière et à 30 jours et 1 an (6-8). Ces résultats ont été confirmés dans trois méta-analyses récentes (9-11), et une étude retrouvait une diminution de la mortalité intra-hospitalière et à 30 jours en faveur du groupe sédation (12).

L'utilisation d'une anesthésie locorégionale pourrait permettre de diminuer la consommation d'hypnotiques et/ou morphiniques et est déjà pratiquée par certaines équipes (5). Elle a été

peu étudiée dans le cadre des procédures TAVI (13), et n'a pas été comparée avec l'anesthésie locale pour les TAVI sous sédation. L'objectif de notre étude était d'évaluer si l'ajout d'une anesthésie locorégionale par « Transverse Abdominal Plane-Block » (TAP), comparée à l'anesthésie locale, permettait de diminuer le recours peropératoire à une technique adjuvante analgésique et/ou sédatrice pour les procédures TAVI réalisées sous sédation.

## **ARTICLE**

# **Transcatheter aortic valve implantations under sedation : evaluation of the value of adding a transversus abdominis plane block to local anesthesia.**

A retrospective single-center study.

## 1. ABSTRACT

*Introduction:* With the increase in the number of TAVI procedures in recent years, anesthetic practices have evolved and sedation, associated with local or regional anesthesia, is now the preferred type of anesthesia by anesthesiologists in charge of these procedures. However, no study has evaluated the usefulness of regional anesthesia compared to local anesthesia (LA) with sedation alone. Our aim was to assess the value of performing a preoperative transverse abdominal plane block (TAP) during TAVI procedures under sedation.

*Material and methods:* In this single-center retrospective study at the University Hospital of Angers, all patients who had transfemoral TAVI under sedation from January to December 2018 were included. The group of patients who received a TAP was compared with those of patients who received local anesthesia (LA) only. The primary endpoint was insufficient intraoperative anesthesia defined by either the need to add propofol, the need for unplanned general anesthesia, or the need for a sedation with a remifentanyl target  $> 3$  ng / mL. Secondary outcomes were postoperative pain, duration of surgery, complications and length of hospital stay.

*Results:* 191 patients were included, 126 in the LA group, and 65 in the TAP group. Populations of both groups were comparable. A significantly greater number of patients required additional anesthesia in the LA group, 111 (89%) vs. 34 (55%) in the TAP group,  $p < 0.01$ . In addition, patients in the LA group more often presented significant pain (EN  $> 4$ ) postoperatively, 14 (11%) vs. 1 (1.6%) in the TAP group,  $p = 0.02$ . There was no significant difference in intraoperative vital parameters, in the use of amines or crystalloids, in the onset of complications, and in durations of the operation or lengths of hospital stay. However, nicardipine was used more frequently in the TAP group intraoperatively.

*Conclusion:* In this retrospective study, patients who received a TAP block required less additional intraprocedural anesthesia than patients who received local anesthesia only for TAVI



procedures under sedation. In addition, although levels of pain were low in both groups, patients with TAP presented less frequently a significant postoperative pain. Prospective studies are needed to confirm the value of regional anesthesia for TAVI procedures under sedation.

*Keywords: Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation, Local Anesthesia, Regional Anesthesia, Transversus Abdominis Plane-block, sedation*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The number of transcatheter aortic valve implantations (TAVI) is constantly increasing, with a rise of more than 50% between 2015 and 2017, while the number of surgical aortic valve replacements (AVR) remains globally stable (1). Aging of the population and expansion of indications partly explain this increase, which is likely to continue in the years to come. Indeed, while TAVIs are currently offered to patients with a moderate to severe risk of perioperative mortality, two multicenter randomized trials have recently shown its potential benefit in patients at low surgical risk (2–4).

Transfemoral approach is now the most common approach for TAVIs, but anesthetic practices vary between physicians, centers, or countries (1,5). Intravenous sedation, associated with local or regional anesthesia, is increasingly used and is the preferred method in a large number of centers (5). Compared with general anesthesia, sedation may reduce procedural time, need for amines, and hospital length of stay, without difference on in-hospital mortality at 30 days and 1 year (6–8). These results were confirmed in three recent meta-analyses (9–11), although one study even found a decrease in in-hospital and 30-day mortality in favor of the sedation (12).

However, the use of sedation may be associated with patient discomfort, that can sometimes lead to patient movements. These movements may interfere with the operator and compromise the smooth running of the procedure and the correct positioning of the aortic prosthesis. In some cases, additional anesthesia is therefore necessary, in the form of general anesthesia or increased sedation, which, if the dosage is too strong, may itself be responsible for complications, in particular respiratory or hemodynamic events.

The use of regional anesthesia could reduce the consumption of hypnotics and/or opioids, and avoid the use of unscheduled general anesthesia. Regional anesthesia is already performed by a few teams (5), but it has been little studied for TAVI procedures (13) and has not been compared with local anesthesia for TAVIs under sedation. Our aim was to assess whether adding a regional anesthesia using a transversus abdominis plane block (TAP), compared to local anesthesia with sedation, allowed for the reduction in the use of an adjuvant analgesic or sedative technique during TAVI procedures.

## **3. METHODS**

### **3.1. Design and patients**

This retrospective single-center observational study, carried out at Angers University Hospital, France, was approved by the local Ethics Committee (reference number: 2020/148). Data was extracted from computerized patient records using M-Bloc Dianesthesia software (Maincare Solutions - Bow Medical) for intraoperative data and M-Crossway (Maincare Solutions) for pre and postoperative data. Patients data was anonymized.

All adult patients who had transfemoral TAVI between January 2018 and December 2018 were included. Patients who received scheduled general anesthesia or for whom important data was missing were excluded.

### **3.2. Clinical management of TAVIs**

All included TAVIs were performed via the femoral approach by a cardiologist and a cardiac surgeon. Patients were selected after a TAVI meeting with at least cardiac surgeons, cardiologists and an anesthesiologist. Procedures were performed in a hybrid operating room. Patients were in supine position. Surgeon or cardiologists inserted venous and arterial femoral lines as well as a right ventricular pacemaker wire. Anticoagulation was performed using unfractionated heparin adjusted for an activated clotting time (ACT) above than 250 s. Medtronic (Edwards) or Sapiens (Corevalve) aortic valves were placed via the arterial femoral route and were impacted during a rapid ventricular pacing. After the procedure, patients were transferred to the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) and then to the cardiology unit.

An anesthesiologist and a nurse anesthetist were systematically present in the operating room for all procedures. Intravenous sedation was performed using remifentanyl used with brain targets between 1 and 3 ng/mL. The unit protocol allowed for the addition of propofol if remifentanyl was not sufficient, starting with a brain target of 1 µg/mL. Patients all had a facemask with an oxygen flow of between 4 and 10 L/min and an end-tidal carbon dioxide monitoring during the procedure. Arterial pressure (via the femoral arterial catheter), electrocardiogram and capillary oxygen saturation were continuously monitored.

The decision to perform a TAP block was made at the discretion of the anesthesiologist in charge of the patient. TAP blocks were performed by the anesthesiologist before the operation, under ultrasound guidance. A volume of 10 to 30 mL ropivacaine 4,75 mg/mL (for a maximum of 2 mg/kg) was injected on the operated side, using an 80 mm 22G needle. There was no other type of regional anesthesia performed for these patients in our center. Local anesthesia was systematically performed by the cardiac surgeon or the cardiologist in charge at the beginning of the procedure, at puncture points of both sides, with a mixture of 20 mL lidocaine 10mg /mL and 10 mL ropivacaine 7,5 mg/mL.

### **3.3. Data collection**

The following variables were collected: age, sex, height and weight, medical history (including hypertension, diabetes, alcohol intake, smoking, dyslipidemia, mental disorders, dementia, peripheral artery disease, regular opioids or narcotics intake, respiratory or cardiac failure, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism and deep vein thrombosis, atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias, neurological disorders, abdominal aortic aneurysm, ischemic stroke, coagulation disorders, previous history of prosthetic aortic valve), usual treatments (including paracetamol, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, tramadol,

codeine, morphine, benzodiazepine, beta-blocker, calcium channel blocker, antiplatelet agent), the date and duration of the procedure, the type of valve, the total and maximum target doses of remifentanil or propofol, the need for general anesthesia with orotracheal intubation, postoperative complications, vital parameters (including intraoperative mean arterial pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturation (SpO<sub>2</sub>)), use of fluids, amines (ephedrine, neosynephrine, atropine and norepinephrine) or nicardipine, intra and postoperative analgesics (paracetamol, nefopam, ketoprofen, morphine), the numerical scale of maximum pain, and the length of hospital stay.

### **3.4. Outcomes**

Two groups were compared, the group of patients who received only a local anesthesia with an intravenous sedation (LA group) and the group of patients who received a TAP block with a local anesthesia and an intravenous sedation (TAP group).

The main objective was to compare the effectiveness of the anesthesia to allow the procedure to be comfortable for the patient and the operators between the two groups. The primary endpoint was a composite endpoint, insufficient anesthesia, defined by: either the need to go for a remifentanil target above than 3 ng/mL, or the need to add propofol, or the need to perform an unplanned general anesthesia.

Secondary endpoints were to compare perioperative pain (assessed by the numerical rating scale of pain (NRS) and the use of analgesic medications), respiratory and hemodynamic parameters including the need for amines, crystalloids or nicardipine, duration of the procedure, the occurrence of severe complications (death, failed TAVI positioning, stroke,

femoral hematoma), the occurrence of rhythm disturbances or the need for pacemaker implantation, and length of hospital stay.

### **3.5. Statistical analysis**

Data are expressed in numbers (%) or in means (standard deviation). Qualitative and quantitative variables were compared between the two groups by a Fisher's exact test or a Student's t test respectively. The comparisons were made bilaterally and the significance level set at 0.05. Statistical analyzes were performed using JMP software (SAS, USA).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Characteristics of the population

In 2018, 211 patients had a TAVI using the trans-femoral approach at the University Hospital of Angers. Among them, 191 (90%) patients were included in our study: 126 patients (66%) in the LA group and 65 (34%) in the TAP group (Figure 1). Populations of the two groups were similar, with however a significant difference in age and alcohol intake (Table I). There was no significant difference between the two groups regarding usual treatments.

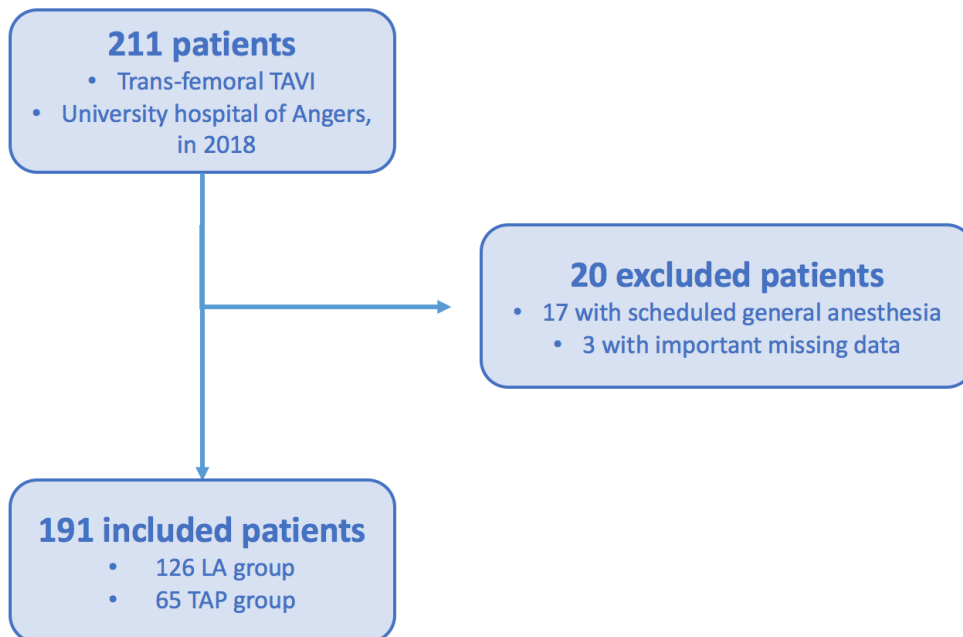


Figure 1. Flow chart.



**Table I. Patients baseline characteristics**

	<b>Global (n = 191)</b>	<b>LA (n = 126)</b>	<b>TAP (n = 65)</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Clinical parameters</b>				
Age (years)	85 (7)	83 (7)	85 (6)	0,04
Female sex	98 (51%)	65 (52%)	33 (51%)	1,0
Height (cm)	162 (9)	162 (9)	162 (10)	0,94
Weight (kg)	69 (15)	71 (15)	68 (15)	0,16
<b>Comorbidities</b>				
Chronic hypertension	143 (75%)	95 (75%)	48 (74%)	0,86
Diabetes	33 (17%)	24 (19%)	9 (14%)	0,42
Current smoker	9 (5%)	6 (5%)	3 (5%)	1,0
Alcohol intake	18 (9%)	16 (13%)	2 (3%)	0,04
Dyslipidemia	79 (41%)	54 (43%)	25 (38%)	0,64
Psychiatric disorder	9 ( 5%)	6 (5%)	3 (5%)	1,0
Dementia	9 (5%)	8 (6%)	1 (2%)	0,17
Peripheral arterial disease	12 (6%)	8 (6%)	4 (6%)	1,0
Opioids use	3 (1,6%)	2 (1,6%)	1 (1,5%)	1,0
Chronic respiratory failure, sleep apnea syndrome	36 (19%)	29 (23%)	7 (11%)	0,05
Acute heart failure	31 (16%)	25 (20%)	6 (9%)	0,07
Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy	52 (27%)	35 (28%)	17 (26%)	0,86
Ischemic heart disease	69 (36%)	47 (37%)	22 (34%)	0,75
PE, DVT	14 (7%)	10 (8%)	4 (6%)	0,78
Atrial fibrillation, rhythm disturbances	63 (33%)	38 (30%)	25 (38%)	0,26
Neurologic disorder	14 (7%)	11 (9%)	3 (5%)	0,39
Abdominal aortic aneurysm	2 (1%)	2 (1,6%)	0	0,55
Ischemic stroke	21 (11%)	15 (12%)	6 (9%)	0,63
Coagulation disorder	2 (1%)	2 (1,6%)	0	0,55
Prosthetic aortic valve	14 (7%)	9 (7%)	5 (8%)	1,0
<b>Usual treatments</b>				
Paracetamol	45 (24%)	30 (24%)	15 (23%)	1,0
NSAI drugs	3 (1,6%)	2 (1,6%)	1 (1,5%)	1,0
Tramadol, codeine	5 (2,6%)	4 (3%)	1 (1,5%)	0,66
Morphinic drugs	4 (2%)	4 (3%)	0	0,30
Benzodiazepine	28 (15%)	18 (14%)	10 (15%)	0,83
Beta blockers	77 (40%)	51 (40%)	26 (40%)	1,0
Calcium channel blockers	53 (28%)	37 (29%)	16 (24%)	0,61
Other anti-hypertensive drugs	153 (80%)	97 (77%)	56 (86%)	0,18
Anti-platelet aggregation	82 (43%)	55 (44%)	27 (42%)	0,88

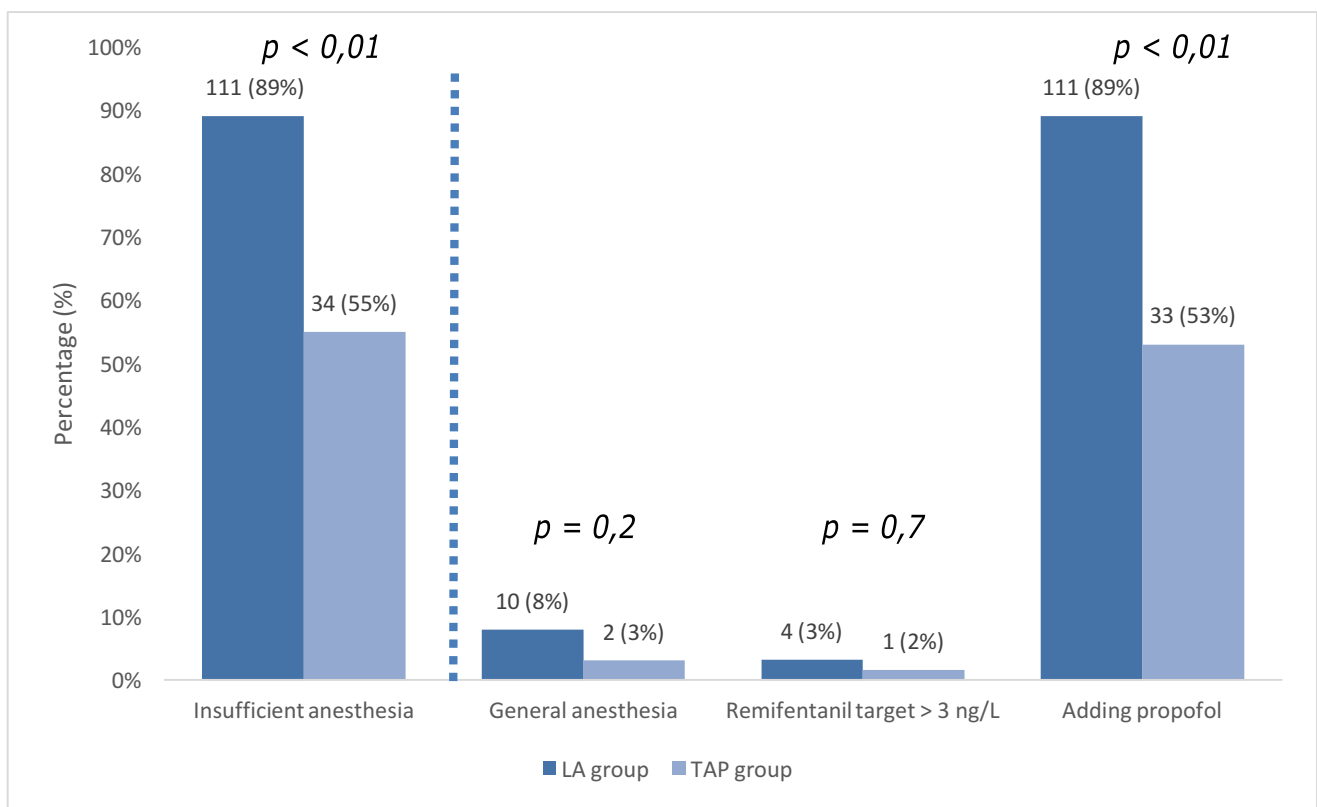
Data in mean (standard deviation) or numbers (%).

PE : pulmonary embolism, DVT : deep vein thrombosis, NSAI : non-steroidal anti-inflammatory.

## 4.2. Primary endpoint

There was a significant difference regarding our primary endpoint, with 111 (89%) patients having had an “insufficient anesthesia” in the LA group vs 34 (55%) patients in the TAP group,  $p < 0.01$  (Figure 2).

Concerning each parameter of this composite criterion, propofol was significantly more used in the LA group, but rates of general anesthesia or use of a remifentanil target  $> 3$  ng/L were not significantly different between the two groups, although higher in the LA group (Figure 2). Maximum and average remifentanil targets were not significantly different between the groups, but the total average doses of propofol received were significantly higher in the LA group (Table II).



**Figure 2. Primary endpoint.**

**Table II. Intraoperative data.**

	<b>LA (n = 126)</b>	<b>TAP (n = 65)</b>	<b>p</b>
<b><i>Intraoperative anesthetics</i></b>			
Maximal remifentanil target (ng/L)	1,3 (0,8)	1,3 (0,6)	0,50
Total remifentanil dose (µg)	124 (112)	123 (170)	0,99
Total propofol dose (mg)	104 (87)	46 (58)	< 0,0001
<b><i>Intraoperative analgesics</i></b>			
Paracetamol	106 (84%)	57 (88%)	0,67
Morphine	2 (1,6%)	0	0,55
Nefopam	3 (2%)	9 (14%)	< 0,01
<b><i>Vital parameters</i></b>			
Maximal MAP (mmHg)	111 (20)	112 (19)	0,80
Minimal MAP (mmHg)	60 (14)	59 (14)	0,50
Maximal HF (by minute)	112 (27)	108 (23)	0,36
Minimal HF (by minute)	63 (12)	64 (14)	0,62
Minimal SpO2 (%)	94 (6)	94 (5)	0,86
SpO2 < 88%	9 (7%)	4 (6%)	1,0
<b><i>Hemodynamic gestion</i></b>			
Use of amines (%)	33 (26%)	15 (23%)	0,73
Fluids > 500 mL (%)	36 (29%)	17 (26%)	0,86
Nicardipine (%)	41 (33%)	31 (49%)	0,04
<b><i>Duration of procedure (min)</i></b>	101 (41)	95 (36)	0,30

Data in mean (standard deviation) or numbers (%).

MAP : Mean arterial pressure, HF : heart frequency, SpO2 : pulsed oxygen saturation

### 4.3. Perioperative pain

Apart from remifentanil, paracetamol was the analgesic the most frequently used, although nefopam and morphine were little used intraoperatively (Table II).

Postoperatively, pain was significantly higher in the LA group, with a higher proportion of patients having an NRS > 4 (Table III). The analgesics used postoperatively were paracetamol, tramadol and morphine, with no significant difference in use between the groups.

**Table III. Postoperative data.**

	<b>LA (n = 124)</b>	<b>TAP (n = 64)</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Pain</b>			
Maximal NRS	1,4 (2)	0,8 (1)	0,02
NRS > 4	14 (11%)	1 (1,6%)	0,02
<b>Analgesic drugs</b>			
Paracetamol	68 (55%)	33 (52%)	0,76
Tramadol	6 (5%)	3 (5%)	1,0
Morphine	7 (6%)	1 (1,6%)	0,27
<b>Complications</b>			
Severe complications	19 (15%)	5 (8%)	0,17
Rhythm disturbances	60 (48%)	27 (42%)	0,44
Postoperative pace-maker implantation	23 (18%)	11 (17%)	1,0
<b>Length of stay (days)</b>	8 (8,7)	7 (5)	0,18

Data in mean (standard deviation) or numbers (%).

NRS : Numerical rating scale of pain

#### 4.4. Other results

Intraoperative vital parameters, use of amines and volumes of fluids were not different between the two groups (Table II). In contrast, nicardipine was used more frequently in the TAP group (Table II).

There was no significant difference between the two groups in the occurrence of perioperative complications, with 24 (13%) severe complications, 87 (46%) rhythm disturbances, and 34 (18%) need of postoperative pace-maker implantation (Table III).

Finally, neither the duration of the procedure nor the length of hospital stay were statistically different between the groups (Tables II and III).

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this study, the use of a TAP block, together with local anesthesia and intravenous sedation, allowed less need for additional anesthesia during TAVI procedures, as well as better postoperative analgesia. To our knowledge, this is the first study, although retrospective, that compared TAP block with local anesthesia for TAVIs using the trans-femoral approach.

TAVI procedures have evolved towards less and less invasive approaches, made possible in particular with the major development of the trans-femoral approach (14–16). With these surgical evolutions, the improvement of techniques, the increase in the number of procedures and experience operators, anesthetic techniques have also been adapted and local anesthesia associated with sedation seems to be now the first anesthetic technique in a large number of centers (5). Several studies have thus compared general anesthesia to analgo-sedation for this procedure, with no benefit found for either anesthesia technique on perioperative mortality (7,12,17). In three recent meta-analyzes, however, sedation was associated with shorter lengths of procedure and hospital stay, and reduced use of vasopressors, without increased mortality or complications (9–11).

However, an insufficient anesthesia may lead to surgical complications, due in particular to the movements of the patient, or to medical hemodynamic or respiratory complications, due to the need for a stronger unplanned sedation (18,19). In our study, insufficient anesthesia was observed more frequently in patients in the LA group. The main difference observed was the need to add a propofol infusion. This may be due to a poorer tolerance of the procedure without an additional TAP block. However, the retrospective nature of our study does not allow us to precisely explain the choice to introduce propofol, which may have been influenced by different anesthetic practices depending on the anesthesiologists in charge.

To our knowledge, although the TAP block has shown its efficiency to reduce perioperative pain in numerous surgeries (20–22), it has not accurately been evaluated in TAVIs. Moreover, other types of regional are commonly used for TAVIs, such as iliofascial, ilioinguinal, femoral and genitofemoral blocks (5). Iliofascial and ilioinguinal blocks have been compared with general anesthesia for trans-femoral TAVIs (13,23,24). In these studies, the use of regional anesthesia allowed better hemodynamic stability, as well as shorter procedure and hospitalization times. As some teams are currently questioning the need for an anesthetist to be present for these procedures, our results are more in the direction of maintaining the presence of an anesthesiologist, for both patient comfort and safety (5,9). Indeed, recent studies observed that intraoperative pain and discomfort are risk factors for conversion of sedation to general anesthesia (19). The need for good intraoperative analgesia is therefore crucial, even if the value of a regional anesthesia still remains to be assessed.

Postoperative pain of TAVI procedures is poorly studied, but seems to be mild and to require little analgesics (25). In our study, patients of the TAP group were less painful although pain levels were not high and not associated with increased postoperative analgesics. However, this difference may allow a shorter hospital stay, even if this study was not powerful enough to prove it.

We did not find any differences in the doses of amines or the volumes fluids used. However, interestingly, less nicardipine was used in the LA group. This could be explained by the fact that propofol, which is hypotensive even at low doses, was more used in this group. Furthermore, 75% of the included patients had an history of hypertension with hypertensive medications, as already observed in previous studies (26). As required in the guidelines (27),

these patients did not take their antihypertensive treatment preoperatively. These data confirm that the use of sedation for TAVI procedures is associated with a very low use of amines, as previously observed (6,8,10).

Finally, duration of the entire procedure (including anesthesia) and length of hospital stays did not differ between the groups, and these times are similar to those found in literature (1). Indeed, performing a TAP block requires little time with ultrasound guidance, especially when physicians are used to do it. In addition, despite the use of heparin in the minutes following the block, no complications linked to the TAP block were found in our study.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, this is a single-center retrospective study, and patients with significant missing data were removed from the analysis. However, our population is similar to those seen in TAVI studies in terms of age, sex and presence of cardiovascular risk factors (1,28,29). Secondly, practices of the different anesthetists performing these procedures were not completely harmonized, with some of them probably using some drugs (propofol for example) earlier than others. Finally, our population was probably too small to show some differences in terms of pain or requirement of general anesthesia. However, it already allowed us to observe a larger requirement in alternative techniques to perform the procedures. Larger and randomized studies should therefore be considered to confirm these results.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In this retrospective study, patients who received a TAP block required less additional intra-procedural anesthesia than patients who had only local anesthesia and intravenous sedation during a TAVI. In addition, these patients had lower postoperative pain levels. Prospective, larger and randomized studies are now needed to evaluate the benefit of regional anesthesia during TAVIs under sedation on patient outcomes and perioperative pain, either for the TAP block or for lower nerve blocks such as the ilio-inguinal block.



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Letter to the Editor

### Current French anaesthetic practices for transcatheter aortic valve replacement: A national survey

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Keywords:

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement  
Anaesthesia  
National survey

#### 1. Introduction

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) has been increasingly performed over the past ten years, due to the broadening of indications and the greater expertise of surgeons and cardiologists [1]. Initially indicated in high-risk patients, recent studies recently reported TAVR interest in patients with intermediate surgical risk [2].

Guidelines governing TAVR procedures mainly focus on the organisation of the centres that carry out this procedure, and patient eligibility criteria [3]. As anaesthetic management of TAVR procedures seems to vary from one centre to another, with no formal guidelines, the present survey was aimed at obtaining the current anaesthetic practices for TAVR in France.

For this purpose, an anonymous survey (Google Forms) was sent to French anaesthesiologist seniors practicing in a TAVR or cardiac surgery unit by email from February to March 2019. The link was also available on the ARCOTHOVA (French Society for Cardiothoracic Anaesthesiologists) website. The survey included 20 questions concerning technical and organisational aspects of anaesthesia for transfemoral TAVR. Answers were collected until April 2019. Data are expressed as medians [interquartile] or numbers (percentage) as appropriate.

Among 439 contacted anaesthesiologists, 124 (28% from 44/53 centres involved in TAVR procedures, 2 (1-3) answers per centre) responded (93 (75%) from university hospital, 17 (14%) from a private centre and 12 (10%) in a non-university hospital). Among them, 113 (91%) reported a main activity in a cardiac unit. In these centres, < 5, 5 to 9 and > 9 TAVR procedures per week were performed in 19 (15%), 71 (57%) and 34 (27%).

#### 2. Technical aspects

Local anaesthesia associated with sedation was preferentially used by 73 responders (59%) (Table 1). Forty-five responders (36%)

stated they never perform general anaesthesia (except for complications).

Remifentanyl was the most commonly used drug for sedation (Table 1). Remifentanyl and propofol were used alone by 50 (40%) and 11 (9%) of responders, respectively. Remifentanyl in combination with propofol or midazolam was used by 20 (16%) and 9 (7%) responders, respectively. Hypnosis was used by 11 (9%) responders, including 7 (6%) in association with an intravenous sedation (Table 1).

Regional anaesthesia was performed by 41 responders (33%). The reasons for not using regional anaesthesia were: a lack of utility (51%), a lack of practice (11%) and potential risks of bleeding (anticoagulation, antiplatelet therapies) (8%).

For postoperative analgesia, paracetamol was given by 119 (96%) responders. Tramadol, nefopam, and morphine or oxycodone were given by 32 (26%), 26 (21%) and 26 (21%) responders, respectively.

#### 3. Organisational aspects

For 74 (60%) responders, an anaesthesiologist and a nurse anaesthetist were systematically present (Table 1). The presence of an anaesthesiologist was not systematic for 28 (23%) responders (8/53 centres in France), and 38 (31%) responders reported the systematic presence of an anaesthesiologist at the weekly meeting dedicated to TAVR.

Patients were transferred to a post-anaesthesia care unit (PACU) immediately after the intervention for 77 (62%) responders. However, this surveillance was rarely or never done in PACU for the others. After TAVR procedure, the patient was admitted in a continuous care unit (cardiology, cardiac surgery, polyvalent, or in intensive care) for 112 (90%) of responders.

Finally, 52 (42%) responders were favourable to the absence of an anaesthesiologist during TAVR procedures, but only under certain conditions (for example, a ward procedure allowing selection of patients) for 20 (38%) of them (Table 1). The main argument for unfavourable responders was the risk of serious complications requiring the immediate presence of an anaesthesiologist in the operating theatre (tamponade, aortic annular rupture, vascular lesions, prosthesis migration).

#### 4. Discussion

In the present survey, local anaesthesia with sedation was mainly preferred for TAVR procedures. However, the presence of an anaesthesiologist during this procedure remains systematic in 36 (82%) responding centres and was warranted by 72 (58%) responders.

Recent studies confirm a significant decrease in the use of general anaesthesia over the last 10 years, even if general anaesthesia remains used in around 50% of procedures [1]. Data

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**Table 1**

Technical and organisational aspects of anaesthesia for TAVR procedures: positive response rate for each item.

Technical aspects	
Most used type of anaesthesia	n = 124
Local anaesthesia alone (%)	11
Local anaesthesia plus sedation (%)	59
Regional anaesthesia plus sedation (%)	18
General anaesthesia (%)	6
Other (%)	4
Medications used for sedation	n = 124
Remifentanyl (%)	65
Propofol (%)	29
Midazolam (%)	22
Dexmedetomidine (%)	5
Sufentanil (%)	5
Ketamine (%)	3
Types of blocks used for regional anaesthesia	n = 41
Ilioinguinal block (%)	15
Fascia iliaca block (%)	10
Transversus abdominis plane block (%)	10
Femoral nerve block (%)	6
Genitofemoral nerve block (%)	4
Hypnosis	n = 124
Never or almost never used (%)	86
Regularly used, with intravenous sedation (%)	6
Regularly used, even without intravenous sedation (%)	3
Sometimes used (%)	3
Organisational aspects	n = 124
Systematic presence of anaesthesiologist or nurse anaesthetist (%)	86
Systematic presence of anaesthesiologist and nurse anaesthetist (%)	60
Presence of an anaesthesiologist	
Regular (%)	96
Systematic (%)	77
Presence of a nurse anaesthesiologist	
Regular (%)	87
Systematic (%)	68
Systematic presence of an anaesthesiologist at the weekly meeting dedicated to TAVR (%)	31
PACU after intervention	
Systematic (%)	52
Often (%)	10
Rarely (%)	21
Never (%)	17
Most often place used for hospitalisation after intervention	
Continuing care unit of cardiology (%)	73
Conventional unit of cardiology (%)	18
Polyvalent continuing care unit (%)	10
Continuing care unit of cardiac surgery (%)	4
Intensive care unit (%)	3
Conventional unit of cardiac surgery (%)	2
Favourable opinion to perform TAVR without systematic presence of an anaesthesiologist	
Yes (%)	16
Yes, but under elective conditions (%)	26
No (%)	58

PACU: post-anaesthesia care unit; TAVR: Transcatheter aortic valve replacement.

from the FRANCE-TAVI registry should soon show rates close to 10% that will confirm the results of our investigation (data not yet published). Indeed, the use of general anaesthesia decreases when TAVR procedures increase [1]. The greater expertise of operators performing TAVR procedures probably led to avoid general anaesthesia. Moreover, local anaesthesia likely allows achieving more TAVR procedures per day. Studies also showed that the use of local anaesthesia with sedation allows a decrease in the per procedure use of catecholamines, and a decrease in the duration of hospitalisation in comparison to general anaesthesia [4]. However, no significant difference on patient outcome has been shown between local anaesthesia plus sedation and general anaesthesia [4], even if this difference tends to be significant in centres where local anaesthesia is preferred [5]. Interestingly, hypnosis seems to

be regularly used by 9% of respondents, and studies are needed to assess its potential interests in this specific indication.

The presence of an anaesthesiologist remains systematic in the vast majority of centres and is warranted by most of respondents. Indeed, sedation with remifentanyl or/and propofol could induce respiratory depression requiring the rapid intervention of an anaesthesiologist. However, the current increase in TAVR activity could prompt to propose a specific organisation, as the number of anaesthesiologists remains stable. Recent European guidelines did not answer this question yet, but highlight the necessary presence of the anaesthesiologist within a heart team regarding TAVR procedures.

With the increase of TAVR, local anaesthesia with sedation seems to be preferred. However, most of anaesthesiologists warrant a systematic presence of an anaesthesiologist during this procedure as it is indicated in intermediate and high-risk patients with potential serious complications. In this context, interdisciplinary professional recommendations could be required to optimally secure this procedure.

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#### Disclosure of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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## Procédures TAVI sous analgo-sédation : évaluation de l'intérêt du TAP block associé à l'anesthésie locale. Une étude rétrospective sur 191 patients.

### RÉSUMÉ

*Introduction* : Avec l'augmentation du nombre de procédures TAVI ces dernières années, les pratiques anesthésiques ont évolué et la sédation, associée à une anesthésie locale ou loco-régionale, est désormais le mode d'anesthésie privilégié par les anesthésistes. Cependant, aucune étude n'a évalué l'utilité de l'ALR en comparaison avec l'AL en cas de sédation seule. Notre but était d'évaluer l'intérêt de la réalisation d'un transverse abdominal plane block (TAP) préopératoire lors des interventions de TAVI sous sédation.

*Matériel et méthodes* : Cette étude rétrospective monocentrique au CHU d'Angers a inclus tous les patients ayant eu un TAVI par voie transfémorale sous sédation de Janvier à Décembre 2018. Le groupe de patients ayant eu un TAP était comparé avec ceux ayant eu une anesthésie locale (AL). Le critère de jugement principal était l'insuffisance d'anesthésie peropératoire définie par soit la nécessité d'ajout de propofol, soit une anesthésie générale non prévue, soit une sédation avec cible de rémifentanil > 3 ng/mL. Les critères de jugement secondaires étaient la douleur postopératoire, la durée d'intervention, les complications et la durée d'hospitalisation.

*Résultats* : 191 patients ont été inclus, 126 dans le groupe AL, et 65 dans le groupe TAP. Les populations des deux groupes étaient comparables. Un nombre significativement plus important de patients nécessitait un complément d'anesthésie dans le groupe AL, 111 (89%) vs 34 (55%) dans le groupe TAP,  $p < 0,01$ . De plus, les patients du groupe AL présentaient plus souvent une douleur importante ( $EN > 4$ ) en postopératoire, 14 (11%) vs 1 (1,6%) dans le groupe TAP,  $p = 0,02$ . Il n'existait pas de différence significative concernant les paramètres vitaux peropératoires, l'utilisation d'amines, de cristalloïdes, et l'apparition de complications, la durée d'intervention ou la durée d'hospitalisation. Cependant, la nicardipine était utilisée plus fréquemment dans le groupe TAP en peropératoire.

*Conclusion* : Dans cette étude rétrospective, les patients ayant eu TAP block nécessitaient moins de compléments anesthésiques que les patients eu une anesthésie locale seule pour les procédures TAVI sous sédation. De plus, bien que les niveaux de douleurs étaient faibles, ces patients présentaient moins souvent une douleur postopératoire sévère. Des études prospectives sont nécessaires pour confirmer l'intérêt de l'anesthésie loco-régionale pour les procédures TAVI sous sédation.

**Mots-clés : Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation, anesthésie locale, anesthésie loco-régionale, Transversus Abdominis Plane-block, sédation**

## TAVI under sedation: evaluation of adding a TAP block to a local anaesthesia. A retrospective single-center study.

### ABSTRACT

*Introduction*: With the increase in the number of TAVI procedures in recent years, anesthetic practices have evolved and sedation, associated with local or regional anesthesia, is now the preferred type of anesthesia by anesthesiologists in charge of these procedures. However, no study has evaluated the usefulness of regional anesthesia compared to local anesthesia (LA) with sedation alone. Our aim was to assess the value of performing a preoperative transverse abdominal plane block (TAP) during TAVI procedures under sedation.

*Material and methods*: In this single-center retrospective study at the University Hospital of Angers, all patients who had transfemoral TAVI under sedation from January to December 2018 were included. The group of patients who received a TAP was compared with those of patients who received local anesthesia (LA) only. The primary endpoint was insufficient intraoperative anesthesia defined by either the need to add propofol, the need for unplanned general anesthesia, or the need for a sedation with a remifentanil target > 3 ng / mL. Secondary outcomes were postoperative pain, duration of surgery, complications and length of hospital stay.

*Results*: 191 patients were included, 126 in the LA group, and 65 in the TAP group. Populations of both groups were comparable. A significantly greater number of patients required additional anesthesia in the LA group, 111 (89%) vs. 34 (55%) in the TAP group,  $p < 0.01$ . In addition, patients in the LA group more often presented significant pain ( $EN > 4$ ) postoperatively, 14 (11%) vs. 1 (1.6%) in the TAP group,  $p = 0.02$ . There was no significant difference in intraoperative vital parameters, in the use of amines or crystalloids, in the onset of complications, and in durations of the operation or lengths of hospital stay. However, nicardipine was used more frequently in the TAP group intraoperatively.

*Conclusion*: In this retrospective study, patients who received a TAP block required less additional intraprocedural anesthesia than patients who received local anesthesia only for TAVI procedures under sedation. In addition, although levels of pain were low in both groups, patients with TAP presented less frequently a significant postoperative pain. Prospective studies are needed to confirm the value of regional anesthesia for TAVI procedures under sedation.

**Keywords: Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation, Local Anesthesia, Regional Anesthesia, Transversus Abdominis Plane-block, sedation**



