


Section: Drug Reference
Subject: SUCCINYLCHOLINE (ANECTINE®)
Section #: 348.37
Issue Date: March 21, 2011
Revision Date:
Approved By: 

Page 1 of 1

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Succinylcholine

1. CLASSIFICATION
 - a. Depolarizing Neuromuscular Blocker
2. ACTIONS / DESCRIPTIONS
 - a. Depolarizing paralytic that affects nicotinic acetylcholine muscle receptors
 - b. Causes depolarization of the muscle membrane leading to fasciculations and some muscular contractions.
 - c. Short duration of action
3. INDICATIONS
 - a. To provide short term paralysis as part of the RSI process
4. CONTRAINDICATIONS
 - a. Known allergy to medication
5. ADVERSE REACTIONS
 - a. Hypotension
 - b. Bradycardia and ventricular dysrhythmias
 - c. Hyperkalemia
 - d. Malignant hyperthermia
 - e. May exacerbate hyperkalemia in trauma patients (hours post-trauma)
6. DRUG ACTION TIME
 - a. Onset: less than 1 minute
 - b. Duration: 4 – 10 minutes
7. INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION POINTS
 - a. Neuromuscular blocking agents will produce respiratory paralysis (intubation & ventilatory support MUST be accomplished).
 - b. No effect on the consciousness or pain level of the patient (consider the use of analgesics).
 - c. Initial muscle fasciculations.
 - d. Premedication with atropine should be strongly considered in pediatrics and with repeat doses in the adult patient.
 - e. Premedication with lidocaine may blunt any increase in ICP associated with intubation (used when etomidate is contraindicated).
 - f. Children are not as sensitive to succinylcholine on a weight basis and may require higher doses.
 - g. Some antibiotics may enhance blocking action.
 - h. Effects are not reversible (other than by time).
 - i. Some patients may have prolonged paralysis due to low levels of cholinesterase.