Supplementary Digital Content

Determinants and practice variability of oxygen administration during surgery in the U.S., a

retrospective cohort study

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INTRODUCTION

Supplemental oxygen is administered to almost all patients during surgery, but the amount of supplemental oxygen administered to patients during surgery is unknown. The optimal fraction of inspired oxygen (FIO₂) to administer patients during surgery is also unknown. Administering high FIO₂ has been thought to offer several advantages, including an improved safety margin for airway manipulation, increasing perioperative arterial and wound tissue oxygen tension to enhance oxidative killing by neutrophils (1,2), improved healing of anastomotic sites (3,4), and decreased postoperative nausea and vomiting (5,6). However hyperoxia may have a host of adverse effects, including promotion of absorption atelectasis (7), direct lung toxicity (8), increased airway inflammation (9), impaired regulation of blood glucose (10), and changes in cardiac index and peripheral vascular resistance (11-13). These different biologic effects may affect surgical patient outcomes and influence anesthesiologist $FIO₂$ administration practice.

Anesthesiologists consider potential risks and benefits of providing supplemental oxygen to patients during surgery, and anesthesiologists control the FIO₂ to patients throughout surgery. The FIO₂ administered to patients during surgery may be influenced by patient factors, procedure factors, provider preferences, and medical center customs. Because administration of supplemental oxygen during surgery may affect patient outcomes, we sought to describe current intraoperative oxygenation patterns across a large heterogenous cohort of patients having surgery and to determine what factors were associated with the FIO₂ administered to patients during surgery.

The aims of this study are to:

- **1.** Assess intraoperative oxygenation practices across a large heterogenous cohort of medical centers and anesthesiologists in patients having surgery who are at increased risk of poor outcomes.
- **2.** Report associations between intraoperative patient oxygenation and patient, procedure, provider, and center factors.

METHODS

Study design:

Multicenter observational cohort study

Study sites:

Multicenter Perioperative Outcomes Group (MPOG) participating medical centers

Study population:

Adult patients receiving general anesthesia with mechanical ventilation during surgery. The inclusion/exclusion criteria for the study are broad to capture a wide set of intraoperative oxygenation practices, a diverse patient population, and a patient population receiving a diverse set of surgical procedures. We included adult patients at increased risk of poor outcomes, defined as inpatient surgery of 120 minutes or longer requiring general anesthesia with endotracheal intubation, and we excluded patients who received surgery or anesthesia procedures that dictate higher concentrations of supplemental oxygen, such as jet ventilation or one lung ventilation.

Inclusion criteria:

- 18 years of age or older
- Duration of surgery of at least 120 minutes
- General anesthesia with tracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation
- Surgery from January 1, 2016 through January 1, 2019

Exclusion criteria:

- Pregnancy
- Outpatient surgery, defined according to surgical scheduling (i.e., patients who are scheduled outpatient but then are admitted to the hospital remain excluded)
- Airway surgery or bronchoscopy, documented using procedural codes
- One-lung or jet ventilation, documented by anesthesiologist
- Preoperative tracheal intubation
- Infrequent documentation of oxygenation during a case defined as any intraoperative periods of 5 minutes or more in which there are no FIO₂ or SpO₂ measurements or less than 60 intraoperative FIO₂ or SpO₂ measurements during the case.
- Previous participation in the study within 90 days (i.e., repeat surgery)

Characterizing of the study cohort:

We will characterize the study cohort by describing patient demographics, baseline medical data, procedural data, and intraoperative mechanical ventilation data. These patient characteristics will include age, sex, BMI, ASA physical status classification, past medical history including diagnosis of heart failure, diabetes, pulmonary disease, and other medical conditions using the Elixhauser comorbidity list, and baseline labs including hemoglobin, creatinine, lactate, and troponin, measured prior to surgery. We will record the specific surgery for each patient, the surgery type, the surgical service, and whether the surgery was considered emergent.

Intraoperative data collected will include minute-to-minute $FIO₂$, minute-to-minute SpO₂, minute-to-minute fraction of inspired nitrous oxide, duration of anesthesia, total fluid administration, total packed red blood cell transfusion, intraoperative hypotension, intraoperative PEEP and TV per kg IBW, and laboratory data including $pO₂$ and hemoglobin/hematocrit. Definitions for some of these variables are outlined in **Protocol Table 1**.

Measurement of intraoperative FIO₂:

We will measure intraoperative oxygen exposure using minute-to-minute FIO₂ data collected for each surgical case and submitted to MPOG. FIO₂ data are collected from intubation to extubation, or from intubation until out of room time for patients who are not extubated in the operating room. For minutes when the FIO₂ is not available, we will assign the FIO₂ as the mean between the previous value and the subsequent value if the missing period is \lt five minutes. If there is no FIO₂ measurement for more than five minutes, the case will be excluded.

We will assess intraoperative oxygenation practice patterns overall and at the center and provider level to determine current practice patterns.

For multivariable modeling we will measure the independent associations between the median $FIO₂$ for each case and patient factors, procedure factors, center, and provider (attending provider, see below). We have chosen median FIO₂ to quantify oxygen exposure during maintenance anesthesia as opposed to mean, because the FIO₂ is typically increased to 100% during preoxygenation, induction, and intubation and also again during emergence and extubation, and these data will increase the mean value of FIO₂ independent of other patient, center, and provider factors of interest. The median FIO₂ better represents oxygen administration during maintenance anesthesia and provides better opportunity to assess associations between variability of FIO₂ administration and other factors since FIO₂ administration is much less variable at induction and emergence from anesthesia.

Missing Data:

Missing FIO2 data will be imputed or cases excluded as described in the "Measurement of intraoperative $FIO₂$ " section above.

Missingness in patient characteristics variables, including preoperative medical history, intraoperative surgical characteristics, and perioperative laboratory measurements, will be addressed using multiple imputation. The chained equations method with predictive mean matching (PMM) will be used to generate five complete datasets. Statistical analyses will be implemented separately for each completed dataset and the results pooled using Rubin's rules.

When preoperative hemoglobin, creatinine, lactate, and troponin are treated as covariates, we will additionally condition on the indicator variable that takes value one when the lab is measured, and zero otherwise.

Anesthesiologist Practice Variation in FIO2 Administration:

We anticipate that the observed variation in delivered FIO₂ may be explained in part by patientlevel factors and also in part by physician-level factors. Some anesthesiologists may typically administer a higher or lower FIO₂ than other anesthesiologists, independent of patient factors. To summarize anesthesiologist provider FIO₂ practice, we will calculate the mean and median FIO₂ of each case and then the mean and median FIO₂ of all cases managed by each provider. Anesthesiologist providers are given a number upon submission to MPOG center and will remain anonymous throughout the study. For cases in which an attending physician and a non-attending physician, nurse anesthetist, or other in-room provider are present, we will cluster cases according to the attending physician because the attending physician is responsible for and in charge of patient care. For cases in which multiple attending physicians care for the patient, we will assign the case to the first attending.

Medical Center Practice Variation in FIO2 Administration:

We anticipate that due to historic, regional, educational, and cultural influences, some medical centers will typically provide a higher or lower $FIO₂$ independent of patient factors. To summarize center $FIO₂$ practice, we will calculate the mean and median $FIO₂$ of each case and then the mean and median $FIO₂$ of all cases at each center, similar to how we summarize anesthesiologist provider FIO₂ practice.

Statistical Analyses:

We will calculate FIO₂ metrics for each case. We will examine the distribution of these data across the entire cohort, within each center, and within each anonymous provider.

We will use multivariable linear mixed-effects regression to measure the independent associations between the median intraoperative $FIO₂$ and various patient factors, procedure factors, center, and provider. We have chosen factors that may be associated with FIO₂ administration. These factors include age, sex, BMI, ASA status, Elixhauser comorbidities (14), emergency surgery, preoperative hemoglobin concentration and its "ordered" indicator (an indicator variable that takes a value of one if preoperative hemoglobin was measured, and zero otherwise), preoperative creatinine concentration and its "ordered" indicator, preoperative troponin concentration and its "ordered" indicator, preoperative lactate concentration and its "ordered" indicator, and surgery type. We have included these indicator variables that take a value of one when the corresponding lab was ordered and measured, and zero otherwise, because the decision to order these labs (indication for ordering) may be associated with intraoperative oxygen administration. We will also include several intraoperative factors that may be associated with intraoperative $FIO₂$ including intraoperative hemoglobin desaturation (defined as the incidence of SpO2 below several thresholds that are commonly used in clinical practice to guide FIO₂ administration, see below), duration of surgery, arterial $pO₂$ and its "ordered" indicator, nitrous oxide exposure (quantified as the median fraction of inhaled nitrous oxide, using minute to minute inhaled nitrous oxide data), median intraoperative tidal volume, median intraop PEEP, intraoperative fluid and blood administration, and intraoperative hypotension. We will model hemoglobin desaturation using minute-to-minute SpO₂ data and an ordinal variable of 4 categories: all

SpO₂ values >=96% (i.e., no desaturation), all SpO₂ >= 93%, all SpO₂ >= 90%, and some SpO₂ < 90%. We selected these values because these values are commonly used in clinical practice to guide $FIO₂$ administration. We do not include the periods of induction and emergence of anesthesia in the calculation of desaturation (defined as the first 15 minutes and before the last 15 minutes of the case), because patients may have brief desaturations during these periods of initiation and termination of controlled ventilation that are less likely to influence the provision of $FIO₂$ during maintenance anesthesia.

Because intraoperative oxygenation practices may influence or be influenced by other preceding, simultaneous, or subsequent intraoperative practices and procedures, and because there may be uncertainty regarding the causal associations among these concurrent intraoperative practices (i.e., oxygenation could impact other intraoperative factors and/or other intraoperative factors could impact oxygenation), we will, in addition, conduct a sensitivity analysis in which the regression model does not adjust for any intraoperative factors, specifically duration of surgery, nitrous oxide exposure, median intraoperative tidal volume, median intraop PEEP, any episode of desaturation not occurring at the time of anesthesia induction or emergence, arterial $pO₂$ and its ordered indicator, intraoperative fluid and blood administration, and intraoperative hypotension. This sensitivity analysis will help us to examine whether any effects of preoperative factors may be mediated by one or more of these intraoperative factors, and the degree to which the effect of oxygenation practices are independent of other intraoperative practices.

The effects of quantitative covariates will be modeled using a flexible splines method. Variability in intraoperative FIO₂ due to provider and center will be modeled using random intercepts indexed by provider and center, respectively, and summarized using the intraclass correlation (ratio of clusterspecific variance to total variance). In addition, we will also estimate the fraction of the total variability in median intraoperative FIO₂ that is explained by the fixed effects (preoperative and/or intraoperative factors) and each random effect (provider, center, and residual), using the method of Nakagawa *et al* (15).

As an exploratory analysis, we will also examine whether the variability among providers differs across centers. This will be implemented using an altered version of the regression model described above, where the provider random effect is nested within center, such that the variability among providers will be estimated separately for each center. Quantitative and graphical regression diagnostics will be examined. In the event that the fully adjusted regression model is not estimable, or when there is other evidence of overfitting, the model complexity will be reduced by omitting nonlinear terms, and additional terms, if necessary. Regression summaries will be presented as estimates, with 95% confidence intervals.

Limitations:

A limitation of this study is the inability to accurately measure the need for increased FIO₂. For example, we are unable to demonstrate that a high FIO₂ is secondary to patient oxygenation issues that mandate a high FIO₂ to maintain SpO₂ or if a high FIO₂ is due to other factors. This is due to the near universal practice of administering a FIO₂ greater than that which is required to maintain hemoglobin oxygenation during surgery. We have attempted to address this limitation by measuring and adjusting for the incidence of any $SpO₂$ data is < 90%, <93% and <96% during surgery, because those are $SpO₂$ values are thresholds that may cause the anesthesiologist to increase the $FIO₂$. Comparing the associations between hemoglobin desaturation below these thresholds and $FIO₂$ will provide some means, although incomplete, to understand if a high FIO₂ is secondary to a low SpO₂ or not.

Protocol Table 1. Intraoperative characteristic definitions

References:

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2. Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) checklist

*Give information separately for exposed and unexposed groups.

Note: An Explanation and Elaboration article discusses each checklist item and gives methodological background and published examples of transparent reporting. The STROBE checklist is best used in conjunction with this article (freely available on the Web sites of PLoS Medicine at http://www.plosmedicine.org/, Annals of Internal Medicine at http://www.annals.org/, and Epidemiology at http://www.epidem.com/). Information on the STROBE Initiative is available at http://www.strobe-statement.org.

3. Supplementary Table 1. Procedural categorization coding using primary anesthesia current procedural terminology (CPT) codes.

4. Supplementary Figure 1. Directed Acyclic Graph showing the relationships among factors and median fraction of inspired oxygen (FIO₂). There were five groups of factors: medical center, anesthesiologist provider, in-room anesthesia provider, patient, and procedure. Anesthesiologists, in-room providers, and patients are nested within medical center. Arrows represent potential causal associations between groups of factors. For each group of factors, we estimated their effects on intraoperative median $FIO₂$ independent from the effects of all other factors.

* AHRQ Elixhauser comorbidities included congestive heart failure, arrythmia, valvular disease, pulmonary circulation disorder, peripheral vascular disease, paralysis, other neurologic disorders, chronic pulmonary disease, hypertension, diabetes, hypothyroidism, renal failure, liver disease, peptic ulcer disease, AIDS/HIV, lymphoma, metastatic cancer, solid tumor without metastasis, rheumatoid arthritis/collagen disease, coagulopathy, obesity, weight loss, fluid and electrolyte imbalance, blood loss anemia, deficiency anemia, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, psychoses, and depression, each treated as a unique covariate in the model. \dagger Surgery procedure categories including the following categories: head, neck, spine and spinal cord, open heart, intrathoracic (non-open heart), extrathoracic, upper abdomen, lower abdomen, gynecologic/pelvic, urologic/male reproductive, extremity, or other (burn, obstetric, radiologic), modeled as one covariate. $*$ SpO₂ desaturation was categorized as an ordinal variable of four categories of incrementally lower nadir SpO₂: all SpO₂ values ≥ 96% (i.e., no desaturation), all SpO₂ ≥ 93%, all $SpO₂ \ge 90\%$, and some $SpO₂ < 90\%$

5. Supplementary Figure 2. Distribution of intraoperative median fraction of inspired oxygen (FIO₂) in patients who received open heart surgery (N=13,576).

6. Supplementary Figure 3. Patient and procedure factors and their independent associations with intraoperative fraction of inspired O₂ (FIO₂). Compared to the primary model, *this model does not contain intraoperative factors*. Model estimates with 95% confidence intervals (CI) represent the change in median intraoperative FIO₂ associated with each factor, independent of all other factors.

7. Supplementary Figure 4. Scatterplot showing the standard deviation of FIO2 among anesthesiologists versus the standard deviation of FIO2 among in-room anesthesia providers within each medical center and independent of patient and procedure factors. Each dot represents one medical center. There was no correlation between the variability of intraoperative oxygen administration among anesthesiologists and among anesthesia in-room providers across medical centers (r=-0.30, P=0.12).

8. **Supplementary Figure 5.** Distribution of median FIO₂ for each case within each medical center. The height of the shaded region corresponds with the proportion of patients who received FIO₂ at that level. Centers are displayed in descending order of overall median FIO₂ for the center.

9. Supplementary Table 2. Variance (95% confidence interval) expressed as percent of total variance in intraoperative FIO₂ administration explained by patient and procedure factors (covariates modeled as fixed effects), and medical center, anesthesiologist, and in-room anesthesia provider (covariates modeled as random effects) in the primary model, the sensitivity analysis that excluded intraoperative factors, and the sensitivity analysis that examined intraoperative *mean* instead of median FIO₂.

