

The Environmental Impact of Labour Analgesia – what do the patients think?

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Introduction

- Entonox use in labour is equivalent to far more CO_2 emissions than alternative options.[1]
- Various NHS Trusts have implemented means to capture and remove escaping NO_2 to protect both staff and the environment.[2]
- This study aimed to examine the effect of increased patient information as a method to change analgesic preferences.

Methods

- Postnatal women at Medway NHS Foundation Trust were provided with an infographic depicting the impact of Entonox in carbon dioxide equivalence, *figure 1.*
- A follow-up questionnaire assessing environmental awareness, recent analgesic choices, and the impact of increased patient information on analgesic preferences was given to each patient.

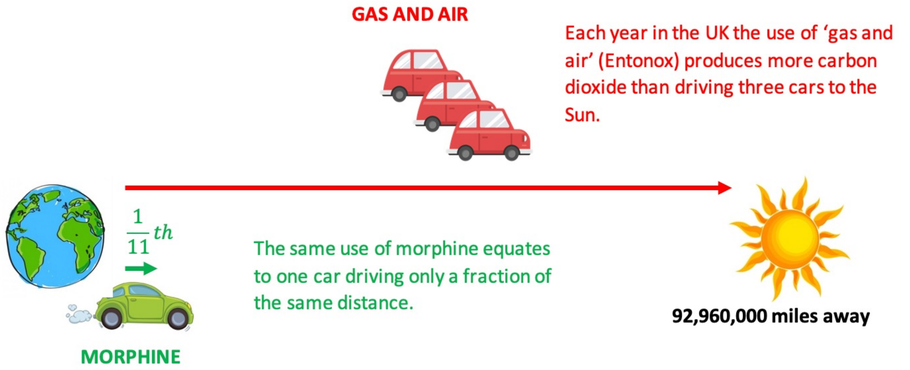


Figure 1: This picture shows the infographic that was presented to each patient.

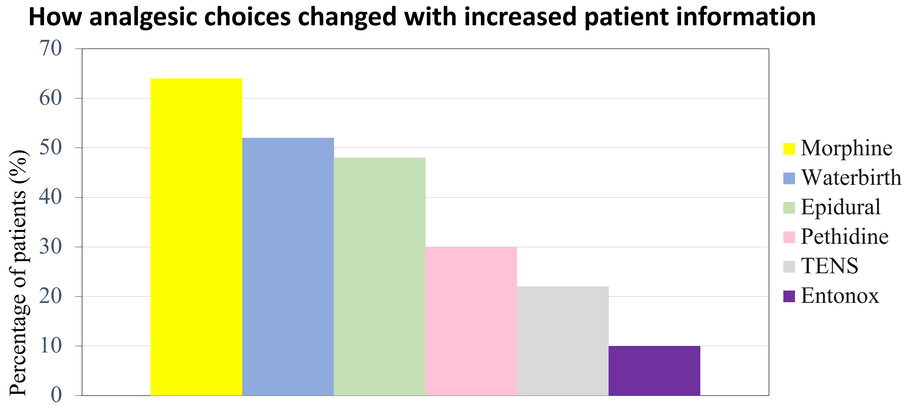


Figure 2: This graph reports the analgesic choices made by patients when fully informed of the environmental impact of various treatment options.

Results

- 50 patients were surveyed (mean age 30±6yrs).
- Entonox was used in 72% (n=36) of deliveries.
- Ninety-eight percent (n=49) reported receiving no information on the environmental impacts of analgesic options.
- Ninety percent (n=45) found the information alarming with 76% (n=38) reporting that it would influence future choices.
- Morphine was the most commonly chosen future analgesic option, Entonox the least (64% (n=32) and 10% respectively), *figure 2*.
- Requests for more information relating to the environmental impacts of treatment options to help better inform decisions were common (n=22).

Discussion

- Current patient information allows for choice but does not inform about environmental impact resulting in patients readily choosing Entonox.
- Improved analgesic information may have a role in reducing the environmental burdens of labour analgesia and improving patient autonomy.

References

1. Pearson F, Sheridan N, Pierce JMT. Estimate of the total carbon footprint and component carbon sources of different modes of labour analgesia. Anaesthesia. 2022;77(4):486–8.
2. The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Newcastle Hospitals become first in the UK to use climate-friendly gas and air during labour - Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2022 Feb 11]. Available from: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/news/newcastle-hospitals-become-first-in-the-uk-to-use-climate-friendly-gas-and-air-during-labour/