Labor Epidural in a Patient with ALS

Riley Hales MD MBA, Jamie Murphy MD, Anna Gitterman MD, Rosie Gaylor MD

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE

- ALS is a neurodegenerative disease that affects upper and lower motor neurons leading to muscle weakness, atrophy, and paralysis
- Although rare, there have been some reports of ALS in young, pregnant patients
- These cases are challenging due to combination of the physiologic changes in pregnancy and the progressive neurologic symptoms of ALS
- Most reports of ALS in pregnancy focus on obstetric outcomes, not anesthetic management

Case

37-year-old G6P2042 with ALS presented to L&D after SROM

L4/5 labor epidural placed with infusion of 2mcg/mL of fentanyl and 0.125% bupivacaine

Uncomplicated delivery of 3000g infant

Evidence of return of motor function within 2 hours

Discharged on post-partum day 3 with baseline neurologic function

Teaching Points

- ALS patients are at high risk for aspiration, respiratory depression, and unpredictable response to muscle relaxants
- There has been concern about the safety of neuraxial in ALS patients - especially in setting of respiratory compromise
- We describe a case where a labor epidural was safely used to facilitate an uncomplicated vaginal delivery with full return to neurologic baseline