



Is transiliac bone biopsy a painful procedure ?

Submitted by Emmanuel Lemoine on Tue, 06/10/2014 - 11:23

Titre Is transiliac bone biopsy a painful procedure ?

Type de publication Article de revue

Auteur Audran, Maurice [1], Maury, Emilie [2], Bouvard, Béatrice [3], Legrand, Erick [4], Baslé, Michel-Félix [5], Chappard, Daniel [6]

Editeur Dustri-Verlag

Type Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture

Année 2012

Langue Anglais

Date 2012/02

Numéro 2

Pagination 97 - 104

Volume 77

Titre de la revue Clinical Nephrology

ISSN 0301-0430

Résumé en anglais

Despite an increased availability of non-invasive procedures to assess bone mass, histological examination of undecalcified transiliac bone biopsies remains a very valuable tool in the diagnosis of metabolic or malignant bone disorders. Nonetheless, clinicians are sometimes reluctant to perform this “invasive” examination, arguing that it might be a painful procedure. The aim of our study was to evaluate pain and anxiety described by patients in the months following the biopsy and to characterize potential early or late side effects. A single interviewer conducted a phone survey (19 items questionnaire) in 117 patients in whom a bone biopsy had been performed by two experienced physicians, with the same material and similar anesthetic and technical procedure. The topics covered pain during or after the biopsy, anxiety, comparison of other potentially painful procedures, early or late side effects as well as global evaluation by the patients. Bone biopsy was judged as non-painful by almost 70% of patients; some discomfort was present in 25% in the following days. The procedure was described as similar as or less painful than bone marrow aspiration, venipuncture or tooth extraction. About 90% of the patients estimated that it was a quite bearable diagnostic procedure. Side effects were not serious. About 7% remembered a vasovagal episode, 47% of local bruising in the following days. There was no report of hematoma or infection. In experienced hands and adapted trephine, transiliac bone biopsy is a safe procedure that brings invaluable information in bone disorders.

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