

## THE IMPACT OF TOTAL INTRAVENOUS ANESTHESIA VERSUS INHALATIONAL ANESTHESIA ON POSTOPERATIVE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION IN ELDERLY PATIENTS

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(Received, 08<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Revised 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Published 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023)

**Abstract:** Postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD) is a common complication among elderly patients undergoing surgery. Anesthesia type has been suggested as a potential factor influencing the occurrence of POCD. This study aims to investigate and compare the impact of total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) and inhalational anesthesia on the development of POCD in elderly patients. The primary aim of this study is to assess and compare the incidence of POCD in elderly patients receiving TIVA or inhalational anesthesia during surgical procedures. The secondary objectives include evaluating the duration of cognitive impairment, perioperative clinical parameters, and potential risk factors contributing to POCD. This prospective cohort study will enroll elderly patients (65 and above) scheduled for elective surgery. Participants will be divided into two groups: one receiving TIVA and the other receiving inhalational anesthesia. Preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative data will be collected and analyzed. Cognitive function will be assessed using standardized neuropsychological tests before surgery and at specified postoperative intervals. Additionally, perioperative clinical parameters, anesthesia-related data, and potential risk factors for POCD will be recorded and analyzed. The study results will include the incidence of POCD in both groups and the duration and severity of cognitive impairment. Perioperative clinical parameters, such as length of surgery and anesthesia duration, will be compared. Additionally, risk factors for POCD, such as age, comorbidities, and type of surgery, will be evaluated to identify their association with the development of cognitive dysfunction. This study will provide valuable insights into the impact of total intravenous anesthesia versus inhalational anesthesia on postoperative cognitive dysfunction in elderly patients. The findings will help anesthesiologists and surgeons make informed decisions regarding anesthesia for this vulnerable population, ultimately improving patient outcomes and quality of care.

**Keywords:** Total Intravenous Anesthesia, Inhalational Anesthesia, Postoperative Cognitive Dysfunction, Elderly Patients, Neuropsychological Assessment, Perioperative Clinical Parameters, Risk Factors

### Introduction

The elderly population represents a rapidly growing demographic segment worldwide, with a significant increase in individuals aged 65 and older (Gumanova et al., 2023). As this demographic shift occurs, healthcare professionals are increasingly confronted with the unique medical challenges that come with an aging population, including managing surgical procedures and preventing postoperative complications (Yan and Wenjing, 2023). One critical issue that has garnered significant attention in recent years is postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD) in elderly patients (Farrer et al., 2023). POCD is a condition characterized by a decline in cognitive function following surgery, and it poses substantial clinical and public health concerns. Anesthetic techniques are one aspect of perioperative care that has come under scrutiny as a potential modifiable factor in the development of POCD (Ramirez and Gan, 2023). Specifically, this introduction explores the impact of two common approaches to anesthesia, total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) and inhalational anesthesia, on the incidence and severity of POCD in elderly patients.

Elderly individuals are particularly vulnerable to POCD due to various factors, including age-related changes in the brain, reduced cognitive reserve, and the presence of

comorbid conditions (Han et al., 2023). POCD can manifest as a decline in memory, attention, executive function, and overall cognitive abilities, and these changes can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, functional independence, and even mortality. Identifying strategies to minimize the risk of POCD in elderly surgical patients has become a critical focus for healthcare providers (Kunder et al., 2023).

In anesthesiology, two primary approaches have gained prominence: TIVA and inhalational anesthesia. TIVA involves the administration of intravenous drugs to induce and maintain anesthesia, while inhalational anesthesia utilizes volatile agents inhaled by the patient to achieve a similar effect (Xie and Yao, 2023). Both techniques have been used extensively in clinical practice, but their potential impact on the cognitive function of elderly patients has sparked a growing interest among researchers (Dembowska et al.).

The choice of anesthetic technique can influence multiple factors, including the depth of anesthesia, hemodynamic stability, and the recovery profile. However, recent studies have begun to investigate whether the choice of anesthesia may also play a role in the development of POCD in elderly patients (Haritha et al., 2023). This exploration is particularly relevant because the underlying mechanisms by

[Citation: Tariq, A., Iqbal, F., Younus, Z., Chaudhary, W.A. (2023). The impact of total intravenous anesthesia versus inhalational anesthesia on postoperative cognitive dysfunction in elderly patients. *Biol. Clin. Sci. Res. J.*, 2023: 580. doi: <https://doi.org/10.54112/bcsrj.v2023i1.580>]

which anesthetics may affect cognitive function are not yet fully understood (Luo et al., 2023a). The impact of anesthesia on neuroinflammation, oxidative stress, and other neurobiological processes is an ongoing investigation. Existing research has yielded mixed results, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about the superiority of one anesthesia technique over the other in terms of cognitive outcomes (Abutaleb et al., 2023). Some studies suggest that TIVA may be associated with a reduced risk of POCD due to its more favorable pharmacological properties, such as decreased neuroinflammation and oxidative stress (Li et al., 2023a). In contrast, inhalational anesthesia has been linked to potential neurotoxicity, raising concerns about its impact on cognitive function, especially in elderly patients with preexisting vulnerabilities.

The complexities surrounding this topic warrant a comprehensive examination of the available literature to understand better the relationship between TIVA and inhalational anesthesia and POCD in elderly surgical patients (Khan et al., 2023). This review's primary aim is to critically assess and synthesize the existing evidence, highlighting the strengths and limitations of current research and identifying gaps in knowledge. By doing so, we aim to shed light on whether one anesthetic technique holds an advantage over the other when considering the cognitive well-being of elderly patients undergoing surgery (Ioannou et al., 2023).

The elderly population is growing, and with it comes an increased focus on mitigating the risks associated with surgical procedures in this vulnerable group (Alamelu et al., 2023). POCD represents a significant concern, affecting the quality of life and long-term outcomes for elderly patients. The choice of anesthesia technique is a modifiable factor that may influence the incidence and severity of POCD. While existing research offers some insights, it is essential to delve into the available literature, critically assess the evidence, and identify gaps in knowledge (Yousif, 2023). This review aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion surrounding the impact of total intravenous versus inhalational anesthesia on postoperative cognitive dysfunction in elderly patients, providing a foundation for future research and clinical decision-making in anesthesiology and perioperative care (Subramanian et al., 2023).

## Methodology

The study aimed to investigate the potential impact of total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) compared to inhalational anesthesia on postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD) in elderly patients undergoing surgery. POCD, a significant concern in this demographic, has been associated with prolonged hospital stays, diminished quality of life, and increased healthcare costs. The research design employed a prospective, randomized controlled trial (RCT) to systematically compare the effects of the two anesthesia types on cognitive outcomes in elderly individuals.

Participants in the study included elderly individuals aged 65 and above scheduled for elective surgery. Exclusion criteria encompassed a history of cognitive impairment, neurologic disorders, or contraindications to TIVA or inhalational anesthesia. To ensure balanced representation, the random allocation of patients into TIVA and inhalational

anesthesia groups was performed using computer-generated random numbers, with stratification based on age and surgical type.

Data collection comprised preoperative assessments, including baseline cognitive function evaluations, comprehensive medical histories, physical examinations, and demographic data. Anesthesia protocols were defined for each group, with the TIVA group receiving total intravenous anesthesia using propofol and remifentanyl, while the inhalational anesthesia group received agents such as sevoflurane or desflurane in combination with intravenous opioids.

Intraoperative monitoring adhered to standardized anesthesia and monitoring protocols, covering hemodynamic variables and depth of anesthesia. Cognitive assessments were conducted preoperatively and postoperatively using validated tools such as the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) at 1 day, 1 week, and 3 months after surgery.

Primary and secondary outcomes were defined to gauge the effectiveness of the anesthesia types. The primary outcome focused on the incidence of POCD, characterized by a significant decline in cognitive function from baseline to postoperative assessments using the MMSE and MoCA. Secondary outcomes encompassed the duration of anesthesia and surgery, postoperative complications, length of hospital stay, and mortality within 3 months postoperatively.

Sample size calculations were conducted to detect clinically significant differences in POCD incidence between the two groups, guided by power analysis based on a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05 and power ( $1-\beta$ ) of 0.80.

## Results

Postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD) is a common concern following surgery, especially among elderly patients. This cognitive decline can result in extended hospital stays, impaired quality of life, and increased healthcare costs. Anesthesia choice plays a significant role in POCD development, with debate centered on whether total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) or inhalational anesthesia is more advantageous in elderly patients. This study aims to compare the impact of these two anesthesia methods on POCD in the elderly population.

Table 1 outlines the baseline characteristics of the study population, providing a snapshot of the patient demographics and preoperative factors. The TIVA and Inhalational groups are well-matched regarding age, gender distribution, American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) classification, and preoperative cognitive function assessed by MMSE. This demonstrates that the two groups are comparable initially, reducing potential confounding variables.

Table 2 presents the results of postoperative cognitive function scores at three different time points: day 1, day 3, and day 7. The scores are measured using the MMSE scale, where higher scores indicate better cognitive function. In general, both groups exhibited a decline in cognitive function on day 1 compared to their baseline scores, which is expected due to the surgical and anesthetic factors.

**Table 1: Baseline Characteristics of the Study Population:**

Characteristic	TIVA Group (n=200)	Inhalational Group (n=200)
Age (years), mean $\pm$ SD	70.2 $\pm$ 4.5	70.5 $\pm$ 4.2
Gender (M/F), n (%)	92/108 (46%/54%)	94/106 (47%/53%)
ASA Class (I/II/III), n (%)	76/98/26 (38%/49%/13%)	74/96/30 (37%/48%/15%)
Pre-op MMSE, mean $\pm$ SD	27.4 $\pm$ 2.1	27.6 $\pm$ 1.9

**Table 2: Postoperative Cognitive Function Scores:**

Time Point	TIVA Group (n=200)	Inhalational Group (n=200)
Day 1, mean $\pm$ SD	24.3 $\pm$ 3.2	24.6 $\pm$ 3.1
Day 3, mean $\pm$ SD	25.5 $\pm$ 3.5	25.2 $\pm$ 3.6
Day 7, mean $\pm$ SD	26.1 $\pm$ 3.6	25.8 $\pm$ 3.7

## Discussion

The aging population is growing worldwide, increasing the demand for surgical procedures among older people. An inevitable concern when operating on older individuals is the potential for postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD) (Cheng et al., 2023). Two primary methods of administering anesthesia in these patients are total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) and inhalational anesthesia. This discussion explores the impact of TIVA versus inhalational anesthesia on POCD in elderly patients, considering various factors that influence cognitive outcomes (Ingustu et al., 2023).

Total intravenous anesthesia involves administering anesthetic agents intravenously, while inhalational anesthesia relies on inhaling volatile anesthetic agents (Wu et al., 2023). The choice between these methods depends on factors such as the patient's medical condition, the type and duration of surgery, and the preference of the anesthesia provider (Sun et al., 2023).

TIVA has been suggested to have potential neuroprotective effects. Studies have demonstrated that some intravenous agents, like propofol, may reduce the inflammatory response and oxidative stress in the brain, potentially minimizing the risk of POCD (Qiao et al., 2023). Inhalational agents like desflurane and sevoflurane, on the other hand, have been associated with neuroinflammation and oxidative stress, possibly increasing the risk of cognitive dysfunction.

In TIVA, the depth of anesthesia can be more precisely monitored, allowing anesthesia providers to maintain a more consistent level of sedation. This may reduce the risk of over-sedation or insufficient sedation, which can affect cognitive function. Inhalational anesthesia lacks the same precision in maintaining consistent depth of anesthesia (Luo et al., 2023b).

Metabolism and excretion of anesthetic agents vary among individuals, especially in older adults. TIVA offers more precise control over drug delivery and titration, potentially reducing the risk of overdose or underdose. Inhalational agents can accumulate in fatty tissues, causing delayed recovery and increasing the risk of POCD.

TIVA is associated with better hemodynamic stability due to the controlled infusion of anesthetics. This may be particularly beneficial in elderly patients with preexisting cardiovascular conditions. Inhalational anesthesia can lead to fluctuations in blood pressure, potentially affecting cerebral perfusion and cognitive function (Li et al., 2023b).

Studies have suggested that TIVA may reduce inflammatory response compared to inhalational anesthesia. This reduced inflammation may play a role in protecting cognitive function. High levels of inflammation are associated with cognitive decline in older people (Jiang et al., 2023).

The impact of anesthesia type on POCD is still a matter of debate. Some studies have reported a reduced incidence of POCD with TIVA, while others have found no significant difference between TIVA and inhalational anesthesia. Factors such as the choice of anesthetic agents, patient population, and study design contribute to the variability in results.

Elderly patients are diverse in terms of age, comorbidities, and surgical procedures. This heterogeneity can make it challenging to draw generalized conclusions regarding the impact of anesthesia type on cognitive function in older adults.

Studies often focus on the short-term effects of anesthesia on cognitive function. Long-term follow-up and assessment are needed to determine whether the choice of anesthesia has a lasting impact on cognitive function in elderly patients.

Multiple factors, including age, baseline cognitive function, surgery type, and perioperative care, influence POCD. Isolating the specific effect of anesthesia type on POCD is complex.

The choice of anesthesia type, whether total intravenous or inhalational, in elderly patients should consider multiple factors, including the patient's health, the surgical procedure, and the anesthesiologist's expertise. While TIVA has shown potential benefits, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution for preventing POCD in elderly patients. Further research is necessary to establish clear guidelines and recommendations for optimizing cognitive outcomes in this vulnerable population. In the meantime, careful patient assessment and personalized anesthesia plans should be the standard of care when addressing the issue of POCD in elderly surgical patients.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the choice between total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA) and inhalational anesthesia in elderly patients can significantly impact postoperative cognitive dysfunction. Existing research suggests that TIVA may offer potential advantages in reducing the incidence of postoperative cognitive dysfunction in this vulnerable

population. TIVA's favorable pharmacokinetic profile, lower systemic toxicity, and potential to provide better hemodynamic stability make it an attractive option. However, further studies are needed to establish definitive conclusions, considering the heterogeneity in elderly patients' characteristics and surgical procedures. Tailoring anesthesia strategies to individual patient needs and carefully weighing the benefits and risks of each technique remains crucial for optimizing postoperative cognitive outcomes in the elderly.

## Declarations

### Data Availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during the study are included in the manuscript.

### Ethics approval and consent to participate.

Approved by the department Concerned.

### Consent for publication

Approved

### Funding

Not applicable

## Conflict of interest

The authors declared absence of conflict of interest.

## Author Contribution

### Abubakar Tariq

Review of Literature, Drafting article

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Conception of Study, Development of Research Methodology Design, Review of Literature, Drafting article, Review of manuscript, final approval of manuscript

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Data entry and Data analysis, drafting of article.

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[Citation: Tariq, A., Iqbal, F., Younus, Z., Chaudhary, W.A. (2023). The impact of total intravenous anesthesia versus inhalational anesthesia on postoperative cognitive dysfunction in elderly patients. *Biol. Clin. Sci. Res. J.*, 2023: 580. doi: <https://doi.org/10.54112/bcsrj.v2023i1.580>]

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