

Involuntary movements following two different anaesthetics

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We present an interesting case report about a young boy, who developed involuntary movements in the recovery room following two different anaesthetics.

Episode 1: A fourteen year old healthy boy with no previous history of epilepsy or movement disorder had uneventful steroid joint injections under general anaesthesia with propofol, isoflurane and nitrous oxide. In the recovering room, he started to develop involuntary dystonic and writhing movements. It was terminated by intravenous injection of Trihexyphenidyl after 45 minutes. He was asymptomatic for eighteen months and then he returned for a repeat of his joint injections.

Episode 2: Propofol was avoided and anaesthesia was induced and maintained with sevoflurane, nitrous oxide and oxygen. The procedure was uneventful, but in the recovery room, he started to have tonic clonic movements of limbs for 5 minutes which settled on its own.

Discussion: Neuroexcitation with anaesthetic agents are an uncommon side effect. Propofol has long been accused of causing seizure like phenomenon¹. In our case, the boy had a recurrence of seizures with sevoflurane based anaesthetic even after avoiding propofol. We review the relevant literature relating to the seizure like phenomenon caused by propofol and sevoflurane². We also discuss the issues relating to his future anaesthetics and fitness to drive in future.

References:

1. Pediatric Anaesthesia 2005;15(4):266-74.
2. Acta Anaesthesia Scandinavia 2004;48(5):663.