Is routine monitoring of gastric residual volume measurement necessary?

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Gastric Residual Volume (GRV) monitoring is a procedure used to assess the nutritional status of patients receiving enteral nutrition in the intensive care unit (ICU).

We read with interest the paper titled “KEPAN Enteral Nutrition (EB) Guide”, published in the journal.1 The sentence you have mentioned in the aforementioned study which is “In a meta-analysis of five studies [n = 998], it was shown that in patients undergoing mechanical ventilation, GRV examination had no effect on nutritional intolerance [relative risk 0.61, 95% CI 0.51-0.72], mortality [0.97, 95% CI 0.73-1.29] and the frequency of ventilator-associated pneumonia [1.03, 95% CI 0.74-1.44].” in your study was misspelled due to an overlooked error. The cited study found that “Compared with monitoring gastric residual volume, not monitoring gastric residual volume decreased the rate of feeding intolerance in critically ill patients (RR = 0.61, 95%CI 0.51–0.72), and did not result in an increment in the rate of mortality (RR = 0.97, 95%CI 0.73–1.29, P = 0.84) or the rate of ventilator-associated pneumonia (RR = 1.03, 95%CI 0.74– 1.44, P = 0.85).”

In the randomized controlled trial, nutritional goals were achieved faster, and there was no increase in the rate of complications in the group without GRV monitoring. The group with GRV monitoring did not show a significant association between GRV and gastroesophageal reflux disease.3

In parallel to the study by Wang et al, patients with or without GRV monitoring showed no notable difference between the groups in terms of ICU-acquired infections, duration of mechanical ventilation, length of ICU stay, or mortality rates, according to another study. In addition, the percentage of patients achieving 100% of their calorie target was higher in the group with GRV monitoring.4

In another study, GRV monitoring was associated with a reduced incidence of vomiting, whereas no gastric residual volume monitoring was associated with a reduced incidence of unnecessary interruptions of enteral nutrition.5

Administration of additional enteral nutrients in people with high GRV can cause aspiration and lead to increased intra-abdominal pressure, which increases the risk of respiratory and circulatory failure as well as intestinal necrosis. It is therefore particularly important to monitor GRV in the early stages of EN feeding, especially in critically ill individuals.6

More studies should be done to emphasize the importance of GRV monitoring in critically ill patients.


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REFERENCES


5. Feng L, Chen J, Xu Q. Is monitoring of gastric residual volume for critically ill patients with enteral nutrition necessary? A meta-analysis and systematic review. *Int J Nurs Pract.* 2023;29:e13124. [Crossref]