

Detection of Hemodynamic Events During the Implementation of a Novel Indigenous Tele ICU system-An Observational Study

ABSTRACT

Aim: To assess the incidence of hemodynamic events and their outcomes detected by remote monitoring of hospitalized patients during the implementation of a novel indigenous Tele-ICU system.

Study design: Prospective observational study.

Place and Duration of Study: Department of Critical Care Medicine, Tele-ICU at Aster Ramesh Hospitals, Vijayawada, between 01-10-2023 to 01-11-2023.

Methodology: This observational study was conducted for a period of 1 month by monitoring 11 ICU units in 9 hospitals, of which 3 were tertiary care and 6 peripheral care centers, remotely using the hub and spoke method by intensivists from the Tele-ICU hub. The study included 209 patients in Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and high dependency units (HDUs) admitted for various critical illnesses.

Results: A total of 314 events were detected and reported for immediate management. The most commonly observed event was Tachycardia (30.56%) followed by Bradycardia (19.42%), Hypoxia (12.73%), non-sustained ventricular tachycardia (7.64%), and Sinus tachycardia (7%). Life-threatening events like Ventricular tachycardia (VT) and Ventricular fibrillation (VF) occurred in 9.3% (n = 19) and 0.98% (n = 2) cases respectively. Among these cases with life-threatening rhythms (VF, VT) 19 cases were revived and 2 cases couldn't be revived. The overall mortality rate was 6.9% (n = 14) of which 64.3% (n = 9) cases were due to bradycardia and 35.7% (n = 5) cases each of Ventricular fibrillation, Ventricular tachycardia, Tachycardia, Sinus Tachycardia and Sinus Bradycardia.

Conclusion: If designed and implemented effectively, the indigenous tele ICU system has the potential to be used as an effective tool for the detection of life-threatening hemodynamic events and thereby help reduce in-hospital cardiac arrest (IHCA) in tertiary and peripheral hospitals.

Keywords: Hemodynamic Events, Indigenous Technology, Remote Monitoring, Tele Intensive Care Unit.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a shortage of intensivists, which has led to the increased use of telemedicine technology, allowing intensivists to remotely and simultaneously care for patients in multiple ICUs (Tele-ICU). This will enable intensivists to manage a greater number of patients at once. Studies have shown that intensivist care in ICU patients reduces morbidity and mortality [1]. Telemedicine Intensive care (Tele-ICU) is defined as "A system in which intensivists and other critical care professionals provide care to onsite staff in the ICU using a network of real-time audiovisual communication and data systems" [2]. It operates like a bedside team, requiring full access to patients' data. Tele-ICU enables real-time monitoring of patient instability and abnormalities, ordering diagnostic tests, making diagnoses, prescribing treatment, and controlling life support devices to implement necessary interventions remotely [3]. Tele-ICU offers clinical supervision and support, potentially improving patients' health outcomes and reducing overall healthcare costs [2]. Several systematic reviews and observational studies have concluded that Tele-ICU Implementation was associated with an overall reduction in ICU mortality [4-7]. Patients admitted to the ICU often experience organ failure which may involve single or multiple organs. Hemodynamic instability, causing a mismatch between oxygen delivery and demand, is a significant contributing factor for organ failure and may eventually cause death [8]. Additionally, conditions such as Bradycardia, hypoxia, non-sustained

ventricular tachycardia, and sinus tachycardia are common complications that can further exacerbate a patient's condition in the ICU. We aimed to evaluate the incidence of hemodynamic events, and their outcomes managed by remote monitoring by implementing a novel Indigenous Tele-ICU system which was built completely locally using available hardware and software and did not use any proprietary system which is very expensive.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study Design and Study Site

This prospective observational study was conducted in the Department of Critical Care Medicine, Tele-ICU at Aster Ramesh Hospitals, Vijayawada. The study received approval from the institutional ethics committee.

2.2 Sample Size and Study Duration

The study involved 209 critically ill patients. This observational study was conducted for a period of 1 month by monitoring 11 ICU units in 9 hospitals, of which 3 being tertiary care and 6 peripheral care centers, remotely using the hub and spoke method by intensivists from the Tele-ICU hub, an annex of the Department of Critical Care Medicine at Aster Ramesh Hospitals, Vijayawada.

2.3 Monitoring Protocol

Patients admitted to the ICUs of tertiary care hospitals and rural ICUs of peripheral hospitals have been monitored using audiovisual hardware installed at the bedside of the patient and connected to the Tele-ICU with the help of a high-speed internet connection and central monitoring software (CMS). The patient's vital parameters like pulse rate, blood pressure, oxygen saturation (SpO₂), and ECG rhythm along with audiovisual feed from the patient's bedside were visible. The Tele-ICU was monitored by qualified intensivists and trained nursing staff who provided point-of-care alerts of hemodynamic events through a dual-way audio connection.

2.4 Statistical Analysis:

The data collection was carried out using predesigned Google Forms. A thorough error check was done. The data was subject to descriptive analysis using cross-tabulation in IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 29.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A total of 209 patients were monitored and analyzed in the study period, of these 58.3% were males and 41.6% were females. The median age was 54 years. A total of 314 events were detected and reported for immediate management. The most observed event was tachycardia (30.56%) followed by bradycardia (19.42%), hypoxia (12.73%), non-sustained ventricular tachycardia (7.64%), and sinus tachycardia (7%). Life-threatening events like ventricular tachycardia(VT) and ventricular fibrillation(VF) occurred in 9.3 % (n = 19) and 0.98% (n = 2) cases respectively. Among these cases with life-threatening rhythms (VF, VT) 19 cases were revived and 2 cases couldn't be revived. The overall mortality rate was 6.9 % (n = 14) of which 64.3 % (n = 9) cases were due to bradycardia and 35.7 % (n = 5) cases each of ventricular fibrillation, ventricular tachycardia, tachycardia, sinus tachycardia and sinus bradycardia. The intensivists at the tele-ICU hub detected these events and alerted the bedside doctor or nurse. The intensivists provided instructions for immediate management to stabilize the patient.

DISCUSSION

Tele-ICU intensivists provide real-time services to multiple care centers regardless of their location. Tele-ICU has an off-site command center in which a critical care team (intensivists and critical care nurses) monitors patients in distance intensive care units (ICUs) through real-time audio, visual, and electronic means, and health information is exchanged. Studies have shown that hospitals with intensivists on staff had a significant reduction in ICU mortality and average length of stay (LOS). However, all hospitals might not be able to employ intensivists because of various reasons like availability and affordability. Tele-ICU can provide real-time monitoring of patient instability or any abnormality in the laboratory, ordering diagnostics tests, making diagnoses and ordering treatment, and implementing any intervention through controlling life support devices. As a result, tele-ICU holds great promise in improving the care of critically ill patients [3].

Eric J et al conducted a study examining the impact of remote monitoring of ICU patients (Tele-ICU) on outcomes such as mortality, complications, and length of stay (LOS). Among 655 patients, the observed hospital mortality rate was 12.0% during the preintervention period and 9.9% during the postintervention period. Similarly, the observed ICU mortality rate decreased from 9.2% in the preintervention period to 7.8% in the postintervention period [1].

By optimizing the telemedicine application in the ICU, both the mortality rate and length of stay could be reduced. A 15-60% reduction in the mortality rate along with a 30% reduction in the average length of stay was observed in a hospital with intermittent remote consultation in the delivery of health services to critical care patients reported by Sajeesh Kumar et al, similar results reported by Lilly et al and Young et al.

4. CONCLUSION

Tele ICU is going to improve the care of critically ill patients in remote corners of the world where bedside expertise in critical care medicine might not be available. With appropriate placement and training of bedside staff in its usage, it can reduce the morbidity and mortality of patients due to the lack of qualified intensivists. The increasing availability of good quality internet connection affordable hardware, and software for creating tele ICU services should be harnessed for reducing morbidity and mortality across the lower and middle-income countries.

CONSENT

Not applicable.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was approved by the institutional ethical committee [RHMB032023].

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ABBREVIATIONS

ICU- Intensive Care Unit

HDU - High Dependency Unit

TELE-ICU - Tele Intensive Care Unit

CMS - Central Monitoring Software

LOS - Length of Stay

VT -Ventricular Tachycardia

VF -Ventricular Fibrillation