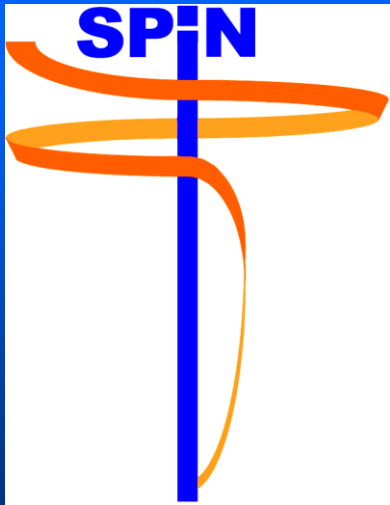


Epidural Analgesia



Dr Brigitta Brandner
University College London

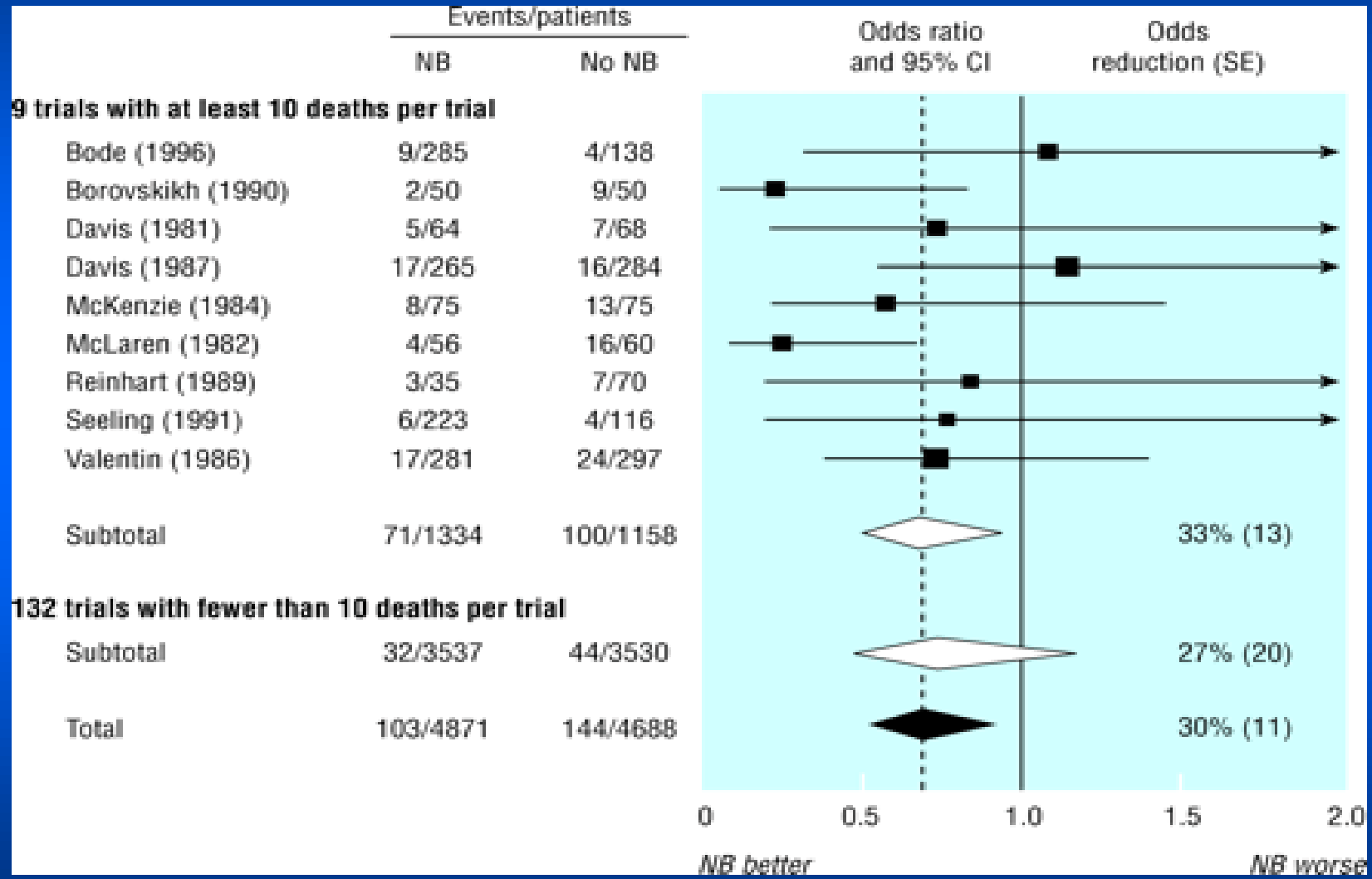
What about epidurals

- Represent the gold standard of pain relief after thoracic and abdominal surgery
- Evidence suggests the most significant improvements in outcome are seen where epidurals are used instead of systemic opiates. Eg Enhanced Recovery Pathway
- Can be managed in a ward setting with sufficient education.

Promises of epidural analgesia

- Mortality
- Morbidity
 - Cardiovascular
 - Respiratory
 - Coagulation
 - Major infections
- Quality of pain relief
- Hospital costs

Effect of neuroaxial blockade on postoperative mortality within 30 days of randomisation (Rodgers 2000)



NNT

NNT to prevent one episode of respiratory failure with epidural analgesia is 15

NNT to achieve 50% reduction in moderate to severe pain with ibuprofen 200mg is 2

Epidural Infusion/PCA



Epidural solutions

- 0.1% Bupivacaine plus fentanyl 2mcg/ml
- Plain 0.1% Bupivacaine
- Epidural PCEA
- Bolus given by midwives

Mr Jones will undergo a thoracotomy.
What would be your analgesia of choice?

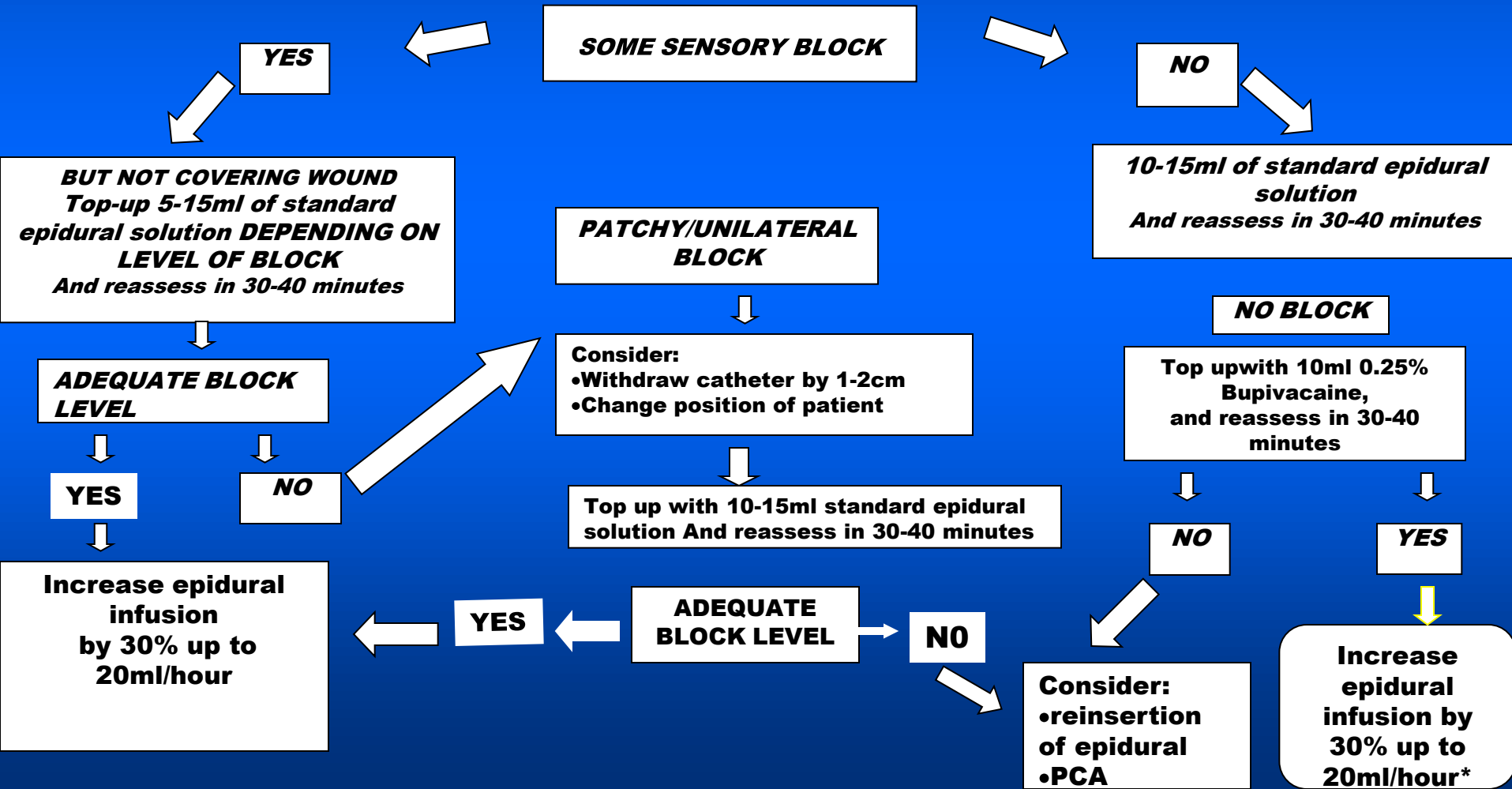


EPIDURAL TOP UP PLAN FOR ADULTS

NB: Standard Epidural Solution = Fentanyl 2mcg/ml in Bupivacaine 0.1%

EPIDURAL NOT WORKING – PATIENT COMPLAINS OF PAIN

- CHECK PUMP IS WORKING
- LOOSE CONNECTION & CATHETER LEAKS
- CATHETER DISPLACED
- ASSESS THE BLOCK – USE ICE OR ETHYL CHLORIDE



Cautionary Tales

- Dural puncture
- Epidural haematoma
- Epidural abscess
- Failure of technique
- Training
- Resource restraint

STOF

AH

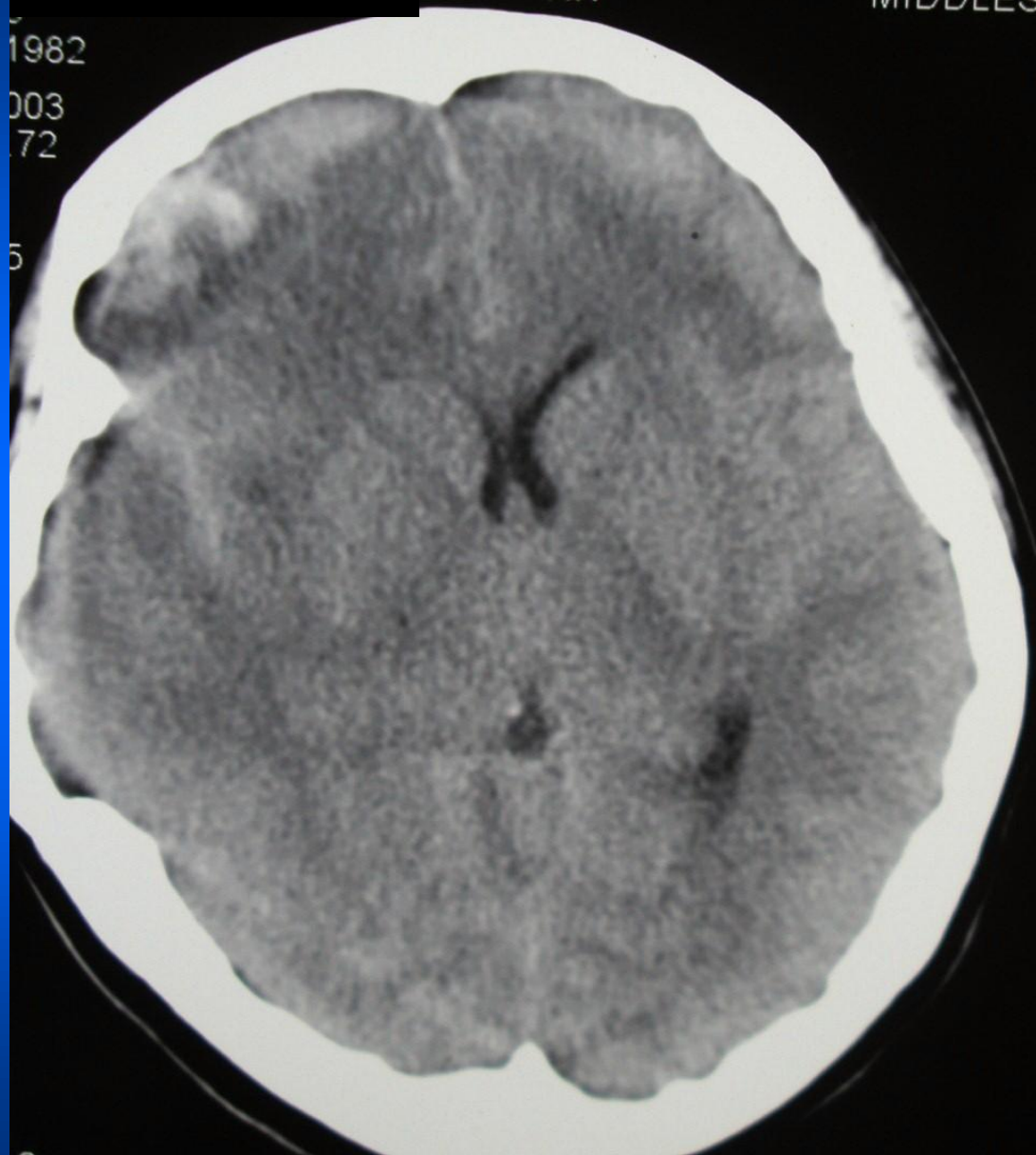
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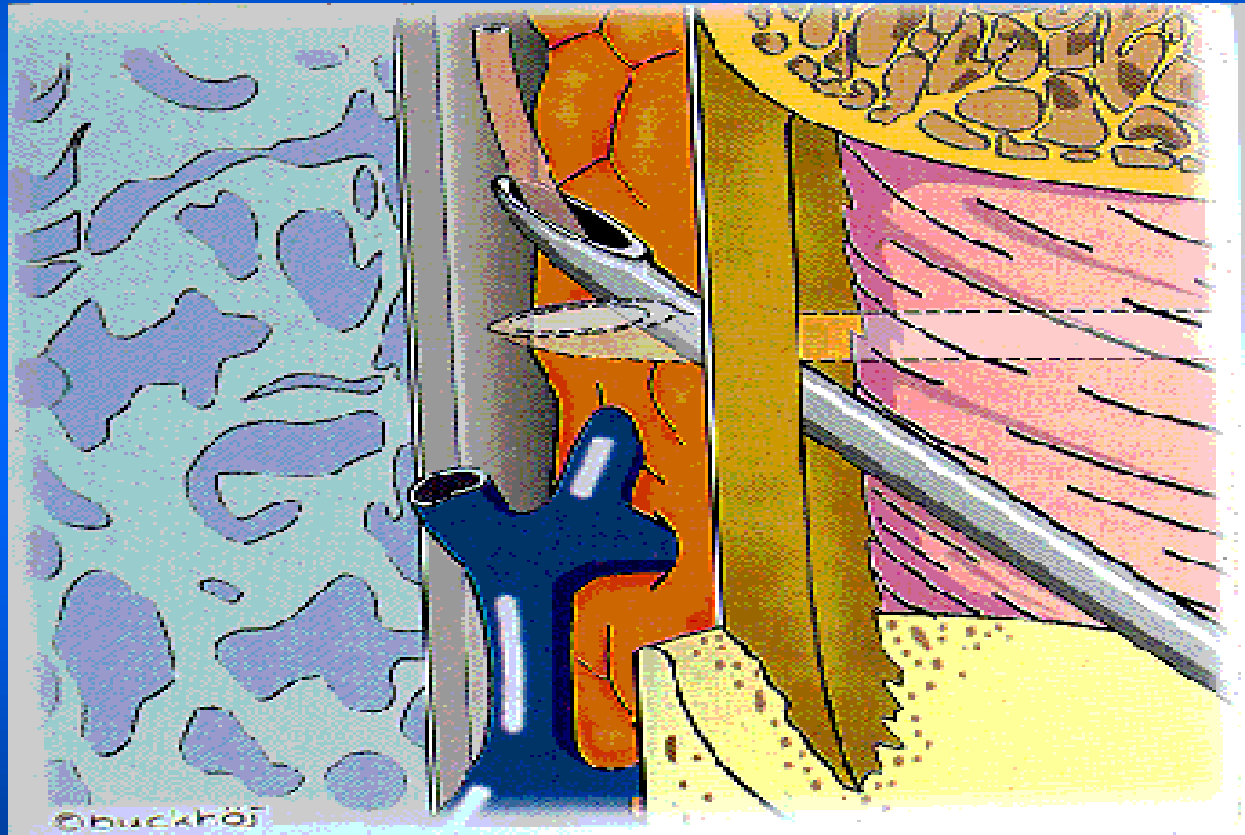
Epidural analgesia as a preemptive strategy

- Systematic review showed significantly improved pain immediately postoperative, but only a trend to long term reduction of chronic pain 1.32(95% CI 0.76-2.3)
- Acute pain predicts longterm pain (Katz et al 1996)
- Similar story with phantom limb pain (Bach vs Jensen)

Epidural analgesia

- Remains controversial
- When to start it
- What to do about heparin
- Relative risks and benefits
- RCA audit.

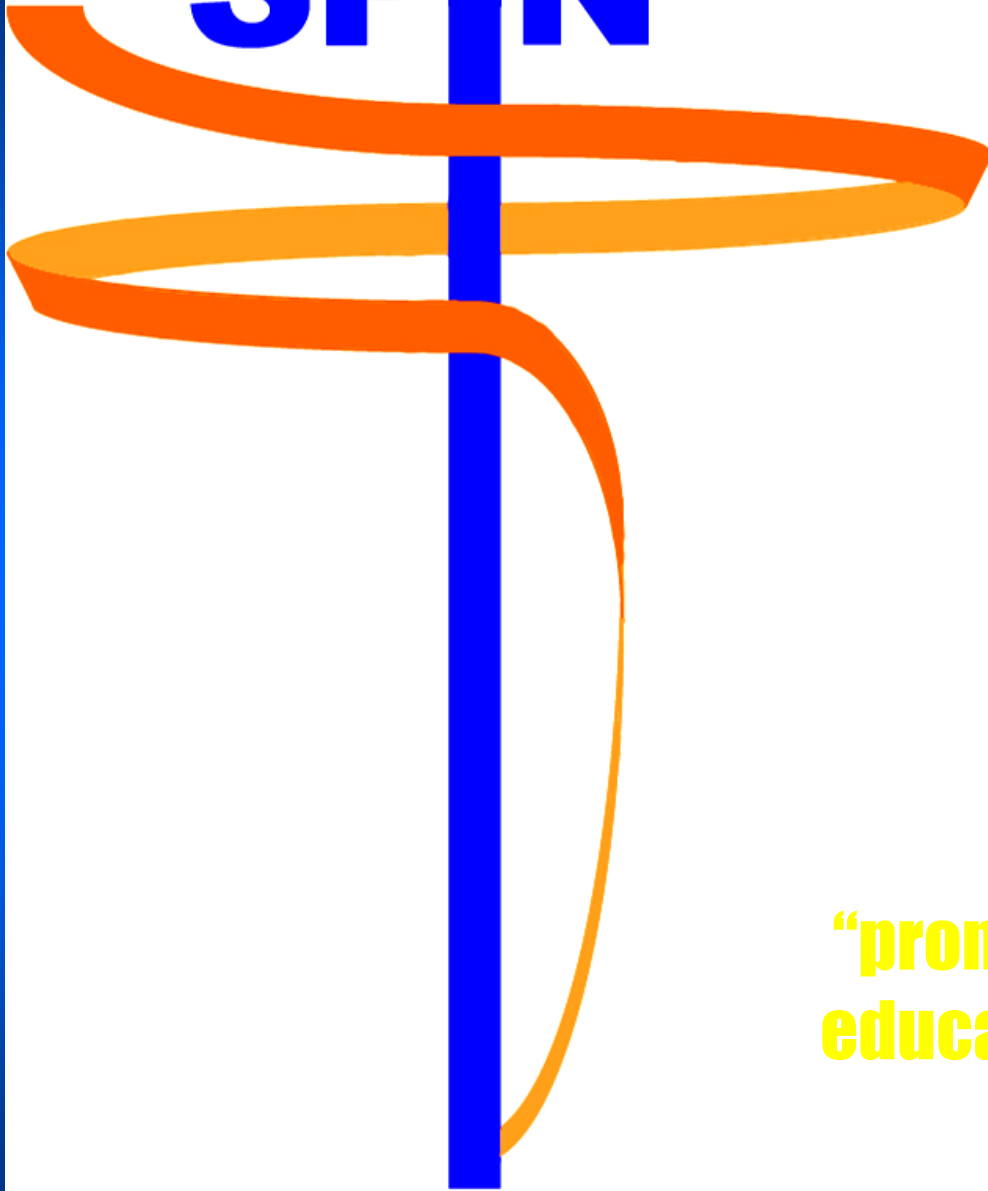
Conclusion



Epidural Analgesia

- Effective in relieving severe pain
- Effective in mobilising the patient early
- Requires skill and training to be safe
- Serious complications have to be recognised

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