



## Tissue Oxygenation in Postoperative Patients: A Pilot Study

Carol Diane Epstein\*, Karen Toby Haghenbeck, Joan Madalone<sup>1</sup>

\*1. College of Health Professions, Pace University, USA.

### ARTICLE INFO

*Article type:*  
Original article

*Article history:*  
Received: 23 Jul 2014  
Revised: 02 May 2015  
Accepted: 27 Jun 2015

*Keywords:*  
Spectroscopy  
Near-Infrared  
Tissue oxygen saturation

### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** In the absence of a gold standard for the clinical diagnosis of shock, clinicians traditionally rely on measurements of vital signs, arterial oxygen saturation of hemoglobin (SaO<sub>2</sub>), serum lactate, and arterial base deficit. Yet values derived from these measurements may remain relatively normal during the early stages of shock while the patient's condition is indeed deteriorating, and the evolution from mild to severe shock can be subtle or extremely rapid. Tissue oxygen saturation (StO<sub>2</sub>) monitoring is a noninvasive technology that has been reported to function as an early warning sign of tissue hypoxia, as systemic blood flow is redistributed to critical organs, primarily in patients with hemorrhagic and traumatic shock, but also in patients with septic shock and in those undergoing cardiac surgery. This pilot study examined the strength of the relationship between initial postoperative StO<sub>2</sub> values and the development of complications in adult patients.

**Methods:** This observational, prospective study was carried out in a convenience sample of 31 hemodynamically stable, postoperative adults admitted to the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) and Cardiothoracic Care Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) at a 643-bed Level I trauma medical center in the Northeastern region of the United States during 2012. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the university and the medical center. Patients were approached in the preoperative holding area, the study was explained, and patients were shown the equipment that would be used in the study. After the patient had been admitted to either the PACU or CTICU, the investigators waited until the bedside nurse performed an initial assessment of hemodynamic stability. Following calibration of the in spectra monitor, the StO<sub>2</sub> probe was placed adhesively on the thenar eminence of the patient's hand. The StO<sub>2</sub> data was monitored continuously, downloaded to a laptop computer, and recorded manually every 15 minutes for at least 2 hours.

**Results:** The first, last, and average StO<sub>2</sub> values were, respectively: 80.71%+9.16; 80.94%+7.07; and, 80.56% +7.18. However, the mean minimum values of the first, last, and average StO<sub>2</sub> values were, respectively: 55%, 67%, and 65%. When minimum StO<sub>2</sub> values were tested for differences in the incidence of postoperative complications, there was a significant difference ( $\chi^2=76.9+7.44$ , range 59-92; Chi Sq, df 18,  $p=0.020$ ).

**Conclusions:** While postoperative patients maintained a stable level of StO<sub>2</sub> values during their early recovery, a case report illustrates that sudden drops in StO<sub>2</sub> values may be sensitive to the detection of the potential for complications.

\* Correspondence Author: Carol Diane Epstein.  
College Of Health Professions, Pace University, USA.  
TEL: +1-914-8824510.  
Email: [cepstein@pace.edu](mailto:cepstein@pace.edu)

*Please cite this paper as:*

Diane Epstein C, Toby Haghenbeck K, Madalone J. Tissue Oxygenation in Postoperative Patients: A Pilot Study. Iran J Crit Care Nurs. 2015;8(2):79-88.

## 1. Introduction

Critical care nurses are concerned with accurate assessment of tissue perfusion in critically ill patients. They rely on seasoned clinical judgment to estimate end-organ perfusion. This includes appraisal of mental status, peripheral skin color and warmth, capillary refill, pulse strength, vital signs, urinary output, and percent oxygen saturation of arterial hemoglobin (SaO<sub>2</sub>) in the form of continuous pulse oximetry (SpO<sub>2</sub>). At the most fundamental level, the adequacy of tissue oxygenation is defined as the balance between the supply of and the demand for oxygen required for cellular function and metabolism at the cellular, organ, and systems levels. When tissue perfusion falls below the critical point at which blood flow to individual organs can no longer be maintained, the clinical diagnosis of shock is made. In adult patients, shock is diagnosed by the progressive onset of hypotension despite fluid resuscitation and in septic normotensive adults, increasing trends in lactate concentration [1].

In the absence of a gold standard for the clinical diagnosis of shock, clinicians rely on measurements of vital signs, arterial oxygen saturation of hemoglobin (SaO<sub>2</sub>), and serum lactate. Yet values derived from these measurements may remain relatively normal during the early stages of shock while the patient's condition is indeed deteriorating, and the evolution from mild to severe shock can be subtle or extremely rapid [2]. Near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) is an optical, noninvasive method of measuring differential forms of hemoglobin. The measurement of tissue oxygen saturation (StO<sub>2</sub>) is derived from calibrated wavelengths of near infrared light to illuminate oxygenated and deoxygenated hemoglobin in the muscle [3]. Previous investigators have examined whether decreases in StO<sub>2</sub> could function as an early indicator of peripheral vasoconstriction and hypoperfusion that accompanies the early stages of shock, primarily in studies of patients admitted with

hemorrhagic and traumatic shock to large teaching medical centers [2 and 4], but also in patients with septic shock [5-6] and undergoing cardiac surgery [6]. Normal StO<sub>2</sub> values in healthy volunteers have been reported to average 87±6 % [6 and 8]. Yet the patterns of sequential StO<sub>2</sub> values in a relatively stable population of adult patients in the immediate postoperative period have not been studied.

## 2. Methods

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from both the University and a 643-bed Level I Trauma Medical Center. Patients were transferred to either the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) or Cardiothoracic Care Intensive Care Unit (CTICU). Patient consent was performed in the preoperative holding area. Following transfer to the PACU or CTICU, the investigators placed the StO<sub>2</sub> probe adhesively on the thenar eminence of the patient's hand. The in Spectra Spectrometer (Hutchinson Technology Inc., Hutchinson, Minn.) quantifies tissue oxygen saturation (StO<sub>2</sub>) based on four wavelengths of light at 680, 720, 760, and 800 nanometers (nm). The spectrometer yields a percentage value of StO<sub>2</sub> derived from optical light paths absorbed by hemoglobin chromophores, including: oxyhemoglobin concentration [HbO<sub>2</sub>], deoxyhemoglobin concentration [HHb], and total hemoglobin concentration [HbO<sub>2</sub>] [2].

The StO<sub>2</sub> data was monitored continuously, downloaded to a laptop computer, and recorded on hard copy every 15 minutes for at least 2 hours. Additional patient data included admitting diagnosis, past medical history, body mass index (BMI), surgical procedures, anesthesia and analgesia, estimated blood loss, duration of operation, vital signs, central hemodynamic parameters, intravenous and blood product therapy, supplemental oxygenation, ventilator settings, endotracheal intubation status, patient activity state, and laboratory data. Following data collection, the

StO<sub>2</sub> probe was removed without incident from the thenar muscle. Patients were monitored for postoperative complications until discharge.

Per cent agreement was used to achieve inter-rater reliability of transcribed data on every third medical record.

In the event that the percent agreement fell below 95%, an investigation of the cause of the lack of agreement was conducted. Descriptive and demographic data were analyzed for evidence of normality and homogeneity of variance. StO<sub>2</sub> data was analyzed for measures of central tendency, including the first, last and mean values (over 2 hours) (IBM SPSS Statistics 20). Based on the work of Cohn and colleagues [2], the mean value was coded as either greater or less than 75%. Frequency of complications was categorized based on organ system [9] and time of onset [10].

Organ system categories included cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, wound, neurological, or urinary systems. Time of onset of complications was categorized as absent, occurring immediately (within 24 hours), early (within 3 days), or late (after 3 days). The number of complications was determined for each patient, and complications were coded absent or present. Non-parametric correlation coefficients were calculated in order to determine the strength of the relationship between StO<sub>2</sub> values and patient outcomes. Results are reported as mean and standard deviation (SD) values. A non-directional p value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

### 3. Results

A convenience sample of 32 adult patients 18 years or older consented to participate in the study (Table 1). Spectrometer malfunction eliminated StO<sub>2</sub> data on one patient (#14), leaving a total sample size of 31. Patient age

ranged from 23 to 84 years of age (57.52±17.52). The sample consisted of 15 females (47%), 17 males (53%); Whites 15 (47%), Blacks 4 (12.5%), Hispanics 4 (12.5%), other 2 (0.94%). The duration of surgical procedures was 285.39 (SD±172.79) minutes. The estimated intraoperative blood loss was 293 (SD±269) milliliters (mL). Recorded mean intravenous fluid intake was 1900 (SD±2528) mL. Initial serum lactate levels were 2.157 (SD±1.70) mmol/L. Initial oral temperature of 97.9 degrees F and first StO<sub>2</sub> values correlated (Pearson's: 0.345, p=0.051). The mean BMI of 31.19±8.4) negatively correlated with the first StO<sub>2</sub> value (Pearson's -0.544, p=0.002). The operative and disposition data are presented in Table 1.

The first, last, and average StO<sub>2</sub> values were, respectively: 80.71%±9.16; 80.94%±7.07; and, 80.56%±7.18 (Table 2). Mean StO<sub>2</sub> values ranged from 65% to 93%; however, only 3 patients had a mean StO<sub>2</sub> less than 75%. The hospital length of stay (LOS) was 7.26 (SD±7.54) days (Table 1). Most postoperative complications (68%) occurred within 24 hours, while 7 patients experienced complications within 3 days, and two patients had complications after 3 days.

One cardiothoracic patient experienced multiple complications with a length of stay of 40 days. No relationship between the incidence of complications and the first, last, and mean StO<sub>2</sub> values was found, respectively, p=0.459, 0.216, 0.319.

However, the minimum values of the first, last, and average StO<sub>2</sub> values were, respectively: 55%, 67%, and 65%. When the minimum StO<sub>2</sub> for each patient was tested for differences in outcome, there was a significant difference in StO<sub>2</sub> values between patients who did or did not develop complications (x=76.9±7.44, range 59-92; Chi Sq, df 18, p=0.020).

Following StO<sub>2</sub> data collection, patient disposition consisted of 3 locations: 1) 14

Table 1: Description of the Sample

| Patient Code | Gender | Age | Diagnosis                                                                                                                        | Procedure/Surgery                                                           | Complications                                                                                                                  | Disposition                        |
|--------------|--------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1            | F      | 43  | Morbid obesity                                                                                                                   | Laparoscopic roux-in-y gastric bypass; liver biopsy; upper endoscopy.       | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 2            | M      | 40  | Hepatitis C                                                                                                                      | Liver resection (resection of single lesion; no metastases).                | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 3            | M      | 23  | Ventral abdominal hernia s/p stab wound                                                                                          | Repair of ventral abdominal hernia.                                         | Oliguria post op day #2 resolved with intravenous fluid bolus.                                                                 | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 4            | F      | 65  | Gastric cancer (antrum)                                                                                                          | Gastrectomy 95% near total; total antrectomy; Roux-en-y gastro jejunostomy. | Return to OR for chest tube placement for pneumothorax; Atelectasis; Oliguria; Paralytic ileus; Fever; PTT 41.8; Possible DVT. | Discharge day 7.                   |
| 5            | M      | 25  | Exploratory laparotomy with removal of mesh                                                                                      | Repair of recurrent incisional hernia.                                      | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 6            | F      | 64  | Exploratory lap; possible gastrectomy.                                                                                           | Antrectomy; Bilroth 2; appendectomy; truncal vagotomy.                      | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 7            | M      | 78  | CAD                                                                                                                              | Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) x 3.                                    | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 8            | M      | 77  | Coronary Artery Disease.                                                                                                         | Coronary Artery Bypass Graft x 3.                                           | None                                                                                                                           | Discharge within 3 days.           |
| 9            | F      | 70  | Rule out colorectal anastomotic stricture s/p Hartman for diverticulitis; Chronic <i>C. Difficile</i> infection; ventral hernia. | Colon resection.                                                            | Bradycardia post-extubation.                                                                                                   | Discharged same day.               |
| 10           | M      | 66  | Bowel Obstruction                                                                                                                | Exploratory laparotomy; Gastroscopy tube placement.                         | Bradycardia post-extubation.                                                                                                   | D/C home within 3 days on hospice. |

Legend: s/p = status post; OR = operating room; DVT = deep vein thrombosis; CABG = Coronary Artery Bypass Graft; CAD = Coronary Artery Disease; AVR = aortic valve replacement; CTICU = cardiothoracic intensive care unit; PACU = post anesthesia care unit; OPCAB = Off Pump Coronary Artery Bypass.

- Patient #14 removed from dataset due to spectrometer malfunction.

(45.2%) patients transferred to a surgical floor; 2) 6 patients (19.4%) were transferred from the PACU to an intensive care unit; and, 3) 11 patients (35.5%) who were admitted to the CTICU remained there.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) determined that there were no significant differences in StO<sub>2</sub> values among the 3 groups of patients (df 25, F 2.875, p=0.121).

#### 4. Discussion

In an integrative review of the use of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring in critically ill patients, most studies were found to have been observational or retrospective in nature [11]. One exception is a non-randomized, prospective study during which clinicians were blinded to StO<sub>2</sub> measurements [2]. Cohn and colleagues compared the sensitivity and specificity of StO<sub>2</sub> measurements with maximum base deficit (BD) and minimum systolic blood pressure (SBP) to accurately predict the incidence of multiple organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS) and mortality in severely injured patients (n=383)

upon their arrival in the emergency department and for the subsequent 24-hour period. StO<sub>2</sub> measurements performed comparatively well with measures of maximum base deficit (BD) in predicting multiple organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS); the sensitivity of both measures for organ failure (minimum StO<sub>2</sub> cutoff=75%; BD=6 mEq/L) was 79%, while the specificity was only 34 to 39% (95% CI). The negative predictive value (NPV) for both measures were satisfactory at a range of 88 to 91%; however, the positive predictive value (PPV) was 18 to 20%, indicating that in approximately 80% of patients, both measures would incorrectly predict organ failure when in fact these patients would not develop MODS.

The greater sensitivity of StO<sub>2</sub> measurements for predicting mortality was significantly higher at 91% (range 85 to 97%), when compared to the sensitivity of base deficit of 75% (64 to 86%) (p=0.0175) or the 80% (71 to 89%) sensitivity of minimum systolic blood pressure (p=0.0489). While we suggest that StO<sub>2</sub>

Table 1: Description of the Sample (continue)

| Patient Code | Gender | Age | Diagnosis                               | Procedure/Surgery                                                               | Complications                                                         | Disposition           |
|--------------|--------|-----|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 11           | F      | 54  | Gastric Carcinoma; Liver metastases     | Total gastrectomy; splenectomy; distal pancreatectomy; exploratory laparotomy.  | None.                                                                 | Discharge at 11 days. |
| 12           | M      | 62  | Diverticulitis                          | Laparoscopic colon resection.                                                   | Persistent tachycardia, new onset atrial fibrillation, hyperglycemia. | Discharge at 16 days. |
| 13           | F      | 57  | Unstable angina; CAD                    | OPCAB.                                                                          | None                                                                  | Discharge at 5 days.  |
| 14 *         | F      | 59  | Sigmoid diverticulitis; hyperlipidemia  | Laparoscopic sigmoid colon resection.                                           | Basal atelectasis with minor lung collapse; Fever; Nausea             | Discharge at 10 days. |
| 15           | F      | 59  | Pancreatic cyst                         | Exploratory lap; partial omentectomy; gastrostomy; drainage of pancreatic cyst. | Low-grade fever.                                                      | Discharge at 13 days. |
| 16           | M      | 25  | Ulcerative colitis with colon stricture | Laparoscopic colon resection.                                                   | None                                                                  | Discharge at 3 days.  |

monitoring may be most useful in early recognition of tissue hypoperfusion and the early onset of shock in severely injured trauma patients, future research should be implemented using randomized clinical trials to determine the clinical utility of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring for betterment of patient outcomes.

The patients in the current study had initial postoperative StO<sub>2</sub> values averaging 80%, close to but less than normal values of 87% reported in human volunteers [6 and 8]. These lower values most likely reflect a transient hypothermia and compensatory peripheral vasoconstriction common in stable postoperative patients. While postoperative patients maintained an overall stable level of StO<sub>2</sub> values during their early recovery, patients who did develop complications had

episodes of sudden significant decreases in StO<sub>2</sub> values, ranging from 55% to 67%, less than the minimum cutoff of 75% recommended by Cohn and colleagues.

More recently, Bazerbashi and colleagues retrospectively identified a 70% cutoff for spot StO<sub>2</sub> measurements as a component of emergency center triage and hospital resource allocation in the prediction of ICU admission in 158 emergent oncology patients [12]. Of the 57 patients with StO<sub>2</sub> less than 70%, 17 were admitted to critical care, whereas only 14 of the 101 patients with StO<sub>2</sub> of 70% to 89% ( $p=0.01$ ) were admitted there. Controlling for mean arterial pressure, pulse, and temperature, an odds ratio of 2.64 (95% confidence interval, 1.18-5.87) and 2.87 (95% confidence interval, 1.23-6.66) was able to predict ICU admission

Table 1: Description of the Sample (continue)

| Patient Code | Gender | Age | Diagnosis                                    | Procedure/Surgery                                                                                                         | Complications                                                                                                                                       | Disposition                                         |
|--------------|--------|-----|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 17           | M      | 74  | CAD; Angina; dyslipidemia; mild parkinsonism | CABG x3; radial artery harvest; saphenous vein; mediasternotomy.                                                          | Unresponsive to first hour; semi awake 2nd hour and subsequently awake.                                                                             | Discharge at 4 days.                                |
| 18           | F      | 57  | Exophytic renal lesion on R kidney           | Open nephrectomy, right.                                                                                                  | None                                                                                                                                                | Discharge within 3 days.                            |
| 19           | F      | 60  | Radiation of ulceration of rectum            | Cystoscopy; bilateral resection of rectum; colonoscopy; gastrostomy; lysis of adhesions; mobilization of splenic flexure. | Nausea & vomiting; analgesia or anesthetic related; paralytic ileus; 3 pain consults; Bladder spasms; Rash on back<br>Incontinent of urine; Emesis. | Discharge at 17 days.                               |
| 20           | M      | 68  | CAD; Severe 3 vessel disease; cardiomyopathy | CABG x3.                                                                                                                  | Chest congestion; pain; Sore throat; cough; shortness of breath; atelectasis.                                                                       | Discharge at 7 days to acute skilled care facility. |
| 21           | M      | 76  | CAD; Aortic valve stenosis                   | CABG x2; AVR.                                                                                                             | None                                                                                                                                                | Discharge at 5 days.                                |
| 22           | M      | 84  | Aortic valve stenosis                        | AVR.                                                                                                                      | Acute anxiety; Rapid atrial fibrillation; Confusion; Delirium.                                                                                      | Discharge at 8 days.                                |
| 23           | M      | 80  | CAD; Aortic stenosis                         | AVR.                                                                                                                      | None                                                                                                                                                | Discharge at 6 days.                                |

for, respectively, patients with a StO<sub>2</sub> less than 70% when compared to those with an StO<sub>2</sub> of 70% to 89%. While this study was limited by its retrospective design and the absence of blinded StO<sub>2</sub> measurements, these authors suggest that StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring may assist in the identification of patients at risk for more

detailed and comprehensive critical care. In the following section, we present a real-time bedside case report which points to the potential utility of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring to identify acute changes in peripheral tissue perfusion.

### Case Report

Table 1: Description of the Sample (continue)

| Patient Code | Gender | Age | Diagnosis                                     | Procedure/Surgery                                                                                                                                       | Complications                                                                                         | Disposition              |
|--------------|--------|-----|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 25           | M      | 75  | Peripheral vascular disease                   | Right femoral popliteal bypass; Right popliteal endarterectomy; Right open angiogram & sheathing of Right common iliac and Right external iliac artery. | None                                                                                                  | Discharge at 6 days.     |
| 26           | F      | 64  | Mitral stenosis; CAD; tricuspid insufficiency | CABG                                                                                                                                                    | Blood transfusions, platelets, fresh frozen plasma, cryoprecipitate; Readmission to CTICU for 2 days. | Discharge at 40 days.    |
| 27           | F      | 52  | Morbid Obesity                                | Lap gastric band; liver biopsy.                                                                                                                         | Possible seizure in PACU.                                                                             | Discharge within 3 days. |
| 28           | F      | 36  | Morbid Obesity                                | Gastric lap band and hernia repair.                                                                                                                     | None                                                                                                  | Discharge within 3 days. |
| 29           | M      | 54  | Unstable angina                               | CABG x2                                                                                                                                                 | Blood transfusion; Oliguria<br>Pulmonary Embolism.                                                    | Discharge at 13 days.    |
| 30           | F      | 53  | Left upper lobe lung nodule                   | Mediasternotomy; lymph node biopsy; L anterior thoracotomy; tumor biopsy.                                                                               | None                                                                                                  | Discharge at 3 days.     |
| 31           | F      | 27  | Anterior mediastinal mass.                    | Sternotomy; anterior mediastinal mass resection.                                                                                                        | None                                                                                                  | Discharge at 5 days.     |
| 32           | M      | 73  | CAD                                           | CABG x3; epi-aortic scan; left endoscopic saphenous vein harvest.                                                                                       | None                                                                                                  | Discharge at 5 days.     |

A 78-year-old male underwent an elective coronary artery bypass grafting times 3. His

Table 2: Study Results

| Patient<br>Code | Initial Admission to<br>PACU (1) or CTICU (2) | Initial Oral Temperature<br>(Fahrenheit) | Initial Heart Rate | Final Heart Rate | Initial Pulse Oximetry<br>(SpO <sub>2</sub> ) | Final Pulse Oximetry<br>(SpO <sub>2</sub> ) | Initial Blood Pressure | Final blood Pressure | Initial StO <sub>2</sub> %<br>Upon Admission | Final StO <sub>2</sub> %<br>Following 2 Hours of<br>Data Collection | Mean StO <sub>2</sub> % Values<br>Over 2 Hours of data<br>Collection |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1               | 1                                             | 95.8                                     | 98                 | 90               | 99                                            | 99                                          | 156/98                 | 151/93               | 68                                           | 78                                                                  | 75                                                                   |
| 2               | 1                                             | 96.9                                     | 64                 | 66               | 99                                            | 99                                          | 131/71                 | 131/64               | 77                                           | 82                                                                  | 79                                                                   |
| 3               | 1                                             | 97.1                                     | 98                 | 91               | 100                                           | 98                                          | 125/69                 | 114/65               | 91                                           | 93                                                                  | 92                                                                   |
| 4               | 1                                             | 96.5                                     | 89                 | 89               | 100                                           | 96                                          | 126/54                 | 120/62               | 78                                           | 75                                                                  | 76                                                                   |
| 5               | 1                                             | 97                                       | 88                 | 98               | 100                                           | 98                                          | 145/80                 | 123/66               | 77                                           | 83                                                                  | 79                                                                   |
| 6               | 1                                             | 97.6                                     | 77                 | 81               | 100                                           | 100                                         | 122/71                 | 123/73               | 86                                           | 85                                                                  | 84                                                                   |
| 7               | 2                                             | 96.5                                     | 87                 | 87               | 98                                            | 95                                          | 122/87                 | 93/64                | 71                                           | 67                                                                  | 65                                                                   |
| 8               | 2                                             | 95                                       | 96                 | 90               | 100                                           | 100                                         | 97/47                  | 102/47               | 79                                           | 79                                                                  | 78.5                                                                 |
| 9               | 1                                             | 96                                       | 103                | 97               | 98                                            | 98                                          | 175/103                | 140/70               | 78                                           | 77                                                                  | 77                                                                   |
| 10              | 1                                             | 97.4                                     | 95                 | 105              | 100                                           | 97                                          | 142/82                 | 121/70               | 77                                           | 85                                                                  | 80                                                                   |
| 11              | 1                                             | 96                                       | 127                | 103              | 100                                           | 100                                         | 148/79                 | 124/83               | 81                                           | 81                                                                  | 82                                                                   |
| 12              | 1                                             | 97.9                                     | 92                 | 113              | 100                                           | 100                                         | 106/66                 | 109/61               | 90                                           | 90                                                                  | 90                                                                   |
| 13              | 2                                             | 94                                       | 126                | 121              | 98                                            | 98                                          | 126/71                 | 121/65               | 82                                           | 79                                                                  | 80                                                                   |
| 15              | 1                                             | 97.5                                     | 87                 | 90               | 100                                           | 99                                          | 147/68                 | 142/69               | 96                                           | 86                                                                  | 91                                                                   |
| 16              | 1                                             | 96.8                                     | 109                | 133              | 100                                           | 100                                         | 140/79                 | 133/75               | 95                                           | 87                                                                  | 89                                                                   |
| 17              | 2                                             | 96.4                                     | 84                 | 84               | 100                                           | 99                                          | 111/63                 | 123/68               | 75                                           | 76                                                                  | 76.5                                                                 |
| 18              | 1                                             | 95.36                                    | 70                 | 68               | 97                                            | 100                                         | 119/62                 | 115/57               | 91                                           | 92                                                                  | 93                                                                   |
| 19              | 1                                             | 96.98                                    | 83                 | 78               | 99                                            | 98                                          | 107/54                 | 130/62               | 78                                           | 74                                                                  | 75.8                                                                 |
| 20              | 2                                             | 96.4                                     | 92                 | 91               | 96                                            | 100                                         | 123/78                 | 115/71               | 73                                           | 73                                                                  | 73                                                                   |
| 21              | 2                                             | 97.2                                     | 81                 | 84               | 97                                            | 97                                          | 130/40                 | 135/36               | 92                                           | 94                                                                  | 93                                                                   |
| 22              | 2                                             | 93.9                                     | 79                 | 99               | 95                                            | 94                                          | 125/61                 | 105/57               | 85                                           | 83                                                                  | 80                                                                   |
| 23              | 2                                             | 96.7                                     | 84                 | 84               | 93                                            | 97                                          | 107/64                 | 136/69               | 70                                           | 70                                                                  | 70                                                                   |
| 24              | 2                                             | 97                                       | 89                 | 108              | 99                                            | 96                                          | 115/30                 | 145/60               | 80                                           | 76                                                                  | 77.8                                                                 |
| 25              | 1                                             | 96.4                                     | 56                 | 82               | 99                                            | 100                                         | 77/41                  | 100/42               | 88                                           | 83                                                                  | 87.5                                                                 |
| 26              | 2                                             | 93.9                                     | 101                | 100              | 99                                            | 97                                          | 132/58                 | 131/67               | 80                                           | 67                                                                  | 71.8                                                                 |
| 27              | 1                                             | 0                                        | 69                 | 63               | 100                                           | 96                                          | 157/84                 | 119/54               | 55                                           | 76                                                                  | 72.5                                                                 |
| 28              | 1                                             | 96.4                                     | 73                 | 100              | 99                                            | 92                                          | 99/46                  | 122/78               | 75                                           | 83                                                                  | 79                                                                   |
| 29              | 2                                             | 97.8                                     | 93                 | 101              | 97                                            | 100                                         | 96/46                  | 102/61               | 70                                           | 77                                                                  | 76.7                                                                 |
| 30              | 1                                             | 0                                        | 92                 | 107              | 96                                            | 94                                          | 122/81                 | 125/75               | 82                                           | 83                                                                  | 81.6                                                                 |
| 31              | 1                                             | 96.1                                     | 93                 | 93               | 100                                           | 99                                          | 106/64                 | 90/47                | 92                                           | 87                                                                  | 83.9                                                                 |
| 32              | 2                                             | 93.7                                     | 84                 | 84               | 96                                            | 98                                          | 131/57                 | 114/51               | 90                                           | 88                                                                  | 88.9                                                                 |

Frequency CTICU = 14 PACU = 17

Legend: PACU = post anesthesia care unit; CTICU = cardiothoracic intensive care unit; Data collection initiated upon admission to CTICU or PACU.

- Patient #14 removed from dataset due to spectrometer malfunction.

extensive health history included: thoracic aneurysm (measuring 6.5 cm), ascending aneurysm (4.5 cm), aortic arch aneurysm (3.4 cm), descending aneurysm (5.5 cm), left carotid endarterectomy, repair of an abdominal aortic aneurysm, left bundle branch lock, left subclavian stenosis, & coronary artery disease. The patient was born with one functioning kidney. The length of surgery was 8 hours. The estimated blood loss was 675 mL. The patient received a total of 1200 mL IV fluid, and 500 mL of platelets. Per standard protocol, the patient was transferred postoperatively directly to the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU).

The tissue oxygen saturation (StO<sub>2</sub>) monitor sensor was placed on the thenar eminence of the patient's left hand, contralateral to the right radial arterial line. At 1615, the patient's initial vital signs were: core temperature 96.1 °, heart rate 87 bpm, blood pressure 127/83 mmHg, MAP 101, cardiac output 3.49 L/minute, cardiac index 1.71, CVP 12 mmHg, 12 breaths per minute, SpO<sub>2</sub> 100%. The StO<sub>2</sub> remained steady at 71%. At 1630, the patient's vital signs remained unchanged, with the exception of a rise in the cardiac output (4.65), cardiac index (2.26), and reduction of SpO<sub>2</sub> to 96%. The StO<sub>2</sub> decreased to 69%. At the same time, a mixed venous blood gas was obtained; the SvO<sub>2</sub> measurement of 69%, nearly identical to the StO<sub>2</sub> of 70%. When a second mixed venous blood gas was obtained at 1645, the SvO<sub>2</sub> of 68.3% closely approximated the StO<sub>2</sub> of 67%. At this point, the patient's BP remained stable during the next hour: 116/78 (93), 108/73 (87), 136/87 (106). However, the StO<sub>2</sub> continued to decrease over the next hour from 69% to 65%. At 1800, the patient's StO<sub>2</sub> decreased to 58%. The patient's BP decreased to 98/66 (78). The patient's pericardial chest tube output acutely drained 580 mL. The patient's core temperature had increased to 97.1 °, the BP further decreased to 94/64 (77).

A fluid bolus was rapidly infused at 1815, while the StO<sub>2</sub> progressively increased from 58% to 67% over 15 minutes. Subsequently, the patient received 1 unit of fresh frozen plasma, 10 units of platelets, and 1 unit of packed red blood cells during the next 4 hours. The patient remained in the CTICU for 5 days; in addition to acute hemorrhage, postoperative complications included basal atelectasis on day 2, and acute confusion on day 3. The patient transferred to CT step down after 5 days, and was discharged to home 2 days thereafter. This case study suggests that acute decreases in StO<sub>2</sub> measurements may serve as a warning sign that the peripheral redistribution of blood flow to the patient's core blood flow functioned as a compensatory response to a sudden increase in pericardial chest tube output.

## 5. Conclusions

The technology of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring remains relatively unknown to critical care practitioners in most intensive care units. In the event that future randomized, blinded clinical trials provide positive cost-benefit findings that support its bedside use, more critical care clinicians will need to become familiar with its accuracy, precision, and usefulness in application to specific patient populations. Critical care nurses are especially important as future users of this technology, as nurses are present at the bedside 24 hours a day and have the critical responsibility for notifying the intensivist when patient status worsens. The clinical utility of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring may be most beneficial in rapidly changing, hemodynamically unstable patients. In this observational study, we determined that most postoperative patients maintained a pattern of stable StO<sub>2</sub> levels. Sudden drops in StO<sub>2</sub>, however, did demonstrate a significant relationship with postoperative complications. Future research based on randomized sampling and rigorous controls in design is needed in order to establish evidence-based

recommendations for the cost-effective use of StO<sub>2</sub> monitoring.

## 6. Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge Dr Jay Yelon, formerly Director of Trauma & Critical Care Services, and the clinicians at Westchester Medical Center who supported this study. The In Spectra Spectrometer probes were donated by Hutchinson Technology Inc., Hutchinson, Minn. The manufacturer had no access to the data or data analysis.

## References

1. Jansen TC, van Bommel J, Schoonderbeek FJ, Sleswijk Visser SJ, van der Klooster JM, Lima AP, et al. Early lactate-guided therapy in intensive care unit patients. *Amer J Resp Crit Care Med*. 2010; 182 (6): 752-761. doi: 10.1164/rccm.200912-1918OC
2. Cohn SM, Nathens AB, Moore FA, Rhee P, Puyana JC, Moore EE, et al. Tissue oxygen saturation predicts the development of organ dysfunction during traumatic shock resuscitation. *J Trauma, Inj, Inf, and Crit Care*. 2007; 62 (1): 44-55.
3. Myers DE, Anderson LA, Seifert RP, Ortner JP, Cooper CE, Beilman GJ, Mowlem JD. Noninvasive method for measuring local hemoglobin oxygen saturation in tissue using wide gap second derivative near-infrared spectroscopy. *J. Biomed. Opt.* 2005; 10(3): 034017-1-18.
4. Ikossi DG, Knudson MM, Morabito DJ, Cohn M J, Wan JJ, Khaw L, Stewart CJ, Hemphill C, Manley GT. Continuous muscle tissue oxygenation in critically ill patients: A prospective observational study. *J Trauma, Inj, Inf, and Crit Care*. 2006; 61 (4): 780-790.
5. Poeze M. Tissue-oxygenation assessment using near-infrared spectroscopy during severe sepsis: Confounding effects of tissue edema on StO<sub>2</sub> values. *Int Care Med*. 2006; 32: 788-789.
6. Skarda, DE, Mulier KE, Myers DE, Taylor J H, Beilman GJ. Dynamic near-infrared spectroscopy measurements in patients with severe sepsis. *Shock*. 2007; 27 (4): 346-353.
7. Sanders J, Toor IS, Yurik TM, Keogh BE, Mythen M, & Montgomery HE. Tissue oxygen saturation and outcome after cardiac surgery. *AJCC*. 2011; 20 (2): 138-145.
8. Creteur J. Muscle StO<sub>2</sub> in critically ill patients. *Curr Opin Crit Care*. 2008; 14(3):361-366.
9. Steele, R. (2007). Postoperative complications. Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. Retrieved March 29, 2008 from <http://www.rcsed.ac.uk/eselect/sig12.htm>
10. Tidy, C. (2007). Common post-op complications. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from <http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/40000174/>
11. Epstein, C.D., Haghenbeck, K.T. Bedside assessment of tissue oxygen saturation (StO<sub>2</sub>) monitoring in critically ill adults: An integrative review of the literature. *Crit Care Res Practice*. vol. 2014, Article ID 709683, 19 pages, 2014. doi:10.1155/2014/709683. <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/ccrp/contents/>
12. Bazerbashi H, Merriman KW, Toale KM, Chaftari P, Cruz Carreras MT, Henderson JD, et al. Low tissue oxygen saturation at emergency center triage is predictive of intensive care unit admission. *J Crit Care*. 2014; 29 (5): 775-779. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrc.2014.05.006>.