Comment on achieving painless anesthesia

To the Editor: In a recent article[1] published in *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* entitled "Buffered Lidocaine 1%/Epinephrine 1:100,000 With Sodium Bicarbonate (Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate) 3:1 Ratio Is Less Painful Than a 9:1 Ratio: A Double-Blind, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Crossover Trial," Vent et al concluded that a 3:1 mixing ratio of lidocaine 1%/epinephrine and sodium bicarbonate was least painful for patients. Although the results of the randomized controlled trial performed by the authors are of great interest, we wish to remind the community of our 2012 article titled "Virtually Painless Local Anesthesia: Diluted Lidocaine Proves To Be Superior to Buffered Lidocaine for Subcutaneous Infiltration."[2] In that study, we showed that a solution of 3 mL of 1% lidocaine plus epinephrine in 30 mL of bacteriostatic 0.9% sodium chloride in a 1:10 ratio was less painful for patients when compared to a solution buffered with sodium bicarbonate. In our practice, this solution of diluted lidocaine is used mostly as a pre-anesthesia, although it does provide enough anesthetic relief for use in biopsies or short surgeries. When performing larger procedures, we continue to use diluted lidocaine as a pre-anesthesia and follow this with injection of lidocaine 1%/epinephrine without sodium bicarbonate, and patients remain comfortable and pain free. Although we appreciate the rigorous methods Vent et al used to find a less painful method of anesthesia, we believe that a solution of lidocaine diluted with normal saline can better provide a near-painless experience for patients.

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