

CPR Guideline Chest Compression Depths May Exceed Requirements for Optimal Physiological Response

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Abstract

A twelve-animal porcine study dataset was retrospectively analyzed to assess associations between chest compression (CC) depth, systolic blood pressure (SBP) and end-tidal carbon dioxide (EtCO₂). Manual CCs were applied for 7 two-minute episodes, at CC depths between 10mm-55mm. A rolling 15s analysis window was applied to the continuous signals. Mean peak values were calculated for each window. Correlation analysis was applied to assess strength of association. Optimal CC depth to achieve physiological targets was determined via cut-off analysis.

A total of 672 observations for each variable were available for analysis. Pearson correlations (95% confidence interval; *p*-value) between CC depth and both SBP and EtCO₂ were 0.84 (0.82, 0.86; *p* < 0.001) and 0.75 (0.71, 0.78; *p* < 0.001) respectively. Optimal CC depth cut-off (sensitivity, specificity) to achieve SBP ≥ 100mmHg and EtCO₂ ≥ 10mmHg was 33 mm (98.29%, 88.94%) and 20 mm (95.08%, 78.30%) respectively.

A reasonable relationship between CC depth and physiological response was observed. Optimal SBP and EtCO₂ cut-offs were achieved significantly below guideline depths. Furthermore, cut-off analysis suggests a disparity between CC depth and physiological targets.

1. Introduction

Cardiac arrest is a leading cause of premature death worldwide. To increase survival rates, early defibrillation and effective cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) are crucial. American Heart Association (AHA) and European Resuscitation Council (ERC) basic life support guidelines consider chest compressions (CCs) at a rate of 100 to 120 CCs min⁻¹ and a depth of 50 to 60 mm to be effective, amongst an adult population [1], [2].

Guideline CC depth between 50 and 60 mm has been proven to marginally increase survival to hospital admission, compared to previous guideline depths of 40 to 50 mm [3], [4]. While associated survival improves with deeper CCs so does the risk of causing injury to the patient [5]. It has been repeatedly reported that CPR performance is poor for both professional and lay rescuers, over several revisions of the basic life support guidelines [6], [7]. The low incidence of CC depth meeting the minimum guideline depth of 50 mm may be due to the target not being suitable for the entire adult population or early onset of fatigue [8], [9].

Research into patient response as an indicator of CPR quality is in its infancy with few physiological endpoints and cut-offs established. Advanced life support guidelines do suggest an alternative indicator of measuring CC quality. Observing a patient EtCO₂ response of < 10 mmHg is associated with mortality and efforts to improve CPR quality should be made. Supporting evidence suggests that continuous CCs between 100 and 120 compressions min⁻¹ maintains ideal blood pressure [10]. Friess *et al.* investigated the use of SBP as an indicator of CPR quality and used a physiological cut-off of 100 mmHg [11].

2. Methods

The purpose of this analysis is to determine the optimal CC depth cut-off to achieve EtCO₂ ≥ 10 mmHg and SBP ≥ 100 mmHg. A retrospective analysis was conducted on a porcine dataset. The dataset included continuous time-series data for CC depth, EtCO₂ and SBP.

2.1. Study Design

All experiments were performed in accordance with the Home Office Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (UK).

Twelve (n = 12) commercial pigs, aged approximately

9 to 10 weeks and weighing between 30 to 35 kg, were used in the study. Ventricular fibrillation (VF) was induced electrically, and the animals were left untreated for 3-minutes. During the untreated period animals were ventilated at an approximate rate of 23 ventilations min^{-1} .

Each animal had 7 episodes of continuous CCs applied at a rate of 110 compressions min^{-1} . The initial 4 episodes of CPR were applied to achieve an EtCO_2 response of < 15 mmHg. The remaining 3 episodes targeted an EtCO_2 response of ≥ 15 mmHg. There was a rest period of at least 10-seconds between CC episodes.

2.2. Signal Data

A HeartStart Mrx (Philips, USA) coupled with Q-CPR technology (Laerdal Medical, Norway) was used to record CC depth data. Depth signal data was captured at a sample frequency of 50 Hz and a resolution of 0.01 mm per least significant bit (LSB).

Physiological signals were recorded using a Datex-Ohmeda S/3 Anesthesia Monitor (GE Healthcare, USA) using VitalSignsCapture [12]. Side-stream capnograph was used to measure EtCO_2 at a sampling frequency of 25 Hz. Arterial blood pressure (BP) was captured from the carotid artery and sampled at a rate of 100 Hz. Outputs from the anesthesia were recorded in mmHg and did not require scaling prior to processing.

2.3. Data Processing

An annotation review was conducted on the CC depth and BP signals, by study personnel, to identify the beginning of each CPR episode. The point of VF induction was also annotated on each BP signal. Annotated BP timepoints were transferable to the capnogram, as the same device was used to capture both signals. Episodes were segmented into 15-second epochs. An analysis window was applied to each epoch to determine the amplitude of the signal.

Local minima were identified in the CC depth signal for each CC. The absolute value of the mean of the identified local minima, within a CC depth epoch, represented the mean CC depth.

Capnograph and BP signals were analyzed by peak envelope. The mean of the upper envelope in the capnograph and BP signals were taken as the representative values of EtCO_2 and SBP for a given epoch, respectively.

Additional processing was applied to the capnograph signals. A rolling, non-overlapping, analysis window was applied to each signal starting at the point of VF induction. The analysis window had a fixed duration of 12-seconds which terminated after 180-seconds of signal had been processed. The amplitude of the capnogram was calculated for each analysis window.

2.4. Data Analyses

Data was audited by independent review prior to analysis. R for statistical computing version 3.5.1 was used for all analyses.

Between-subject, within-subject and Pearson correlation analyses were applied to each combination of CC depth, EtCO_2 and SBP [13], [14].

Cutoff analyses were applied to the data to determine the probabilistic CC depth cutoffs for $\text{EtCO}_2 \geq 10$ mmHg and peak BP ≥ 100 mmHg. Depth cutoffs increased in increments of 1 mm and accuracy, sensitivity, specificity and Youden index were calculated for each CC depth cutoff. Cutoffs which are associated with maximum accuracy and maximum Youden index were reported.

The decay of EtCO_2 post VF induction was characterized by applying a log-log regression model to EtCO_2 and time data.

3. Results

A total of 672 observations (12 animals x 7 episodes x 8 analysis windows) of EtCO_2 and SBP were processed. There were 13 missing observations for CC depth due to the administration of shallow CCs.

There were non-significant, between-subject correlations observed for all combinations of CC depth, EtCO_2 and SBP (Table 1).

Strong within-subject correlations were observed for all combinations of the study endpoints; EtCO_2 and CC depth (0.83), EtCO_2 and SBP (0.86) and SBP and CC depth (0.89). Additionally, lower, yet strong Pearson correlations were observed between all combinations of study endpoints. Further details of all correlation analyses are listed in Table 1.

The maximum accuracy cut-off for CC depth to predict $\text{EtCO}_2 \geq 10$ mmHg was 20 mm. This provided an accuracy of 89.68% (sensitivity = 0.95; specificity = 0.78; Youden index = 0.73). The optimal depth cut-off to classify SBP ≥ 100 mmHg was 33 mm with an accuracy of 92.26% (sensitivity = 0.98; specificity = 0.89; Youden Index = 0.87).

Adjusting this analysis in favor of maximum Youden index the optimal cut-off for $\text{EtCO}_2 \geq 10$ mmHg increases to 21 mm with an accuracy of 87.86% (sensitivity = 0.90; specificity = 0.84; Youden index = 0.74). There was no change to the depth-cut off after adjusting for maximum Youden index.

The deterioration of EtCO_2 post VF induction resembled characteristics indicative of exponential decay. Data obtained for each 12-second analysis window during the untreated duration of VF were not considered to be

Table 1 Pearson, between-subject and within-subject correlation analyses for each combination of EtCO₂ (n = 672, SBP (n = 672) and CC depth (n = 659).

Covariates	r	95% CI	p-value
Between-Subjects			
EtCO ₂ and Depth	-0.28	(-0.77, 0.43)	0.386
SBP and Depth	-0.22	(-0.75, 0.48)	0.491
SBP and EtCO ₂	0.35	(-0.35, 0.80)	0.258
Within-Subjects			
EtCO ₂ and Depth	0.83	(0.80, 0.85)	< 0.001
SBP and Depth	0.89	(0.87, 0.91)	< 0.001
SBP and EtCO ₂	0.86	(0.84, 0.88)	< 0.001
Pearson			
EtCO ₂ and Depth	0.75	(0.71, 0.78)	< 0.001
SBP and Depth	0.84	(0.82, 0.86)	< 0.001
SBP and EtCO ₂	0.80	(0.78, 0.83)	< 0.001

normally distributed (Figure 1). The median value for each timepoint was applied to a regression model to trend the decay. A log-log model was trained after applying a natural log transform to both EtCO₂ and time data. This provides the following model satisfied in terms of EtCO₂ (y) as a response of time (x):

$$y = e^{-0.71 \cdot \log_e(x) + 5.45}$$

The coefficient of determination for the model (R²) was 0.996, suggesting the model is a good fit for the data.

4. Discussion

The analysis conducted could not identify a relationship between animals which received higher CC depths and those which produced higher EtCO₂ or SBP responses. This may be consequential to the damage which occurred to one animal's thorax or that each animal received the same treatment.

The Pearson correlation analysis suggests there is a moderate relationship between CC depth and EtCO₂ (0.75). Comparisons of CC depth and SBP show a stronger relationship (0.84). Comparing the Pearson and within-subject correlation analyses, however, suggests there is an improvement in the relationship, between the covariates, when fitting for each animal.

The binary outcome for EtCO₂ ≥ 10 mmHg was predicted accurately using a CC depth cut-off of 20 mm; Accuracy (89.68%) and Youden index (0.73). Similarly, binary outcome for SBP was accurately predicted with a depth cut-off of 33 mm; Accuracy (92.26%) and Youden index (0.87).

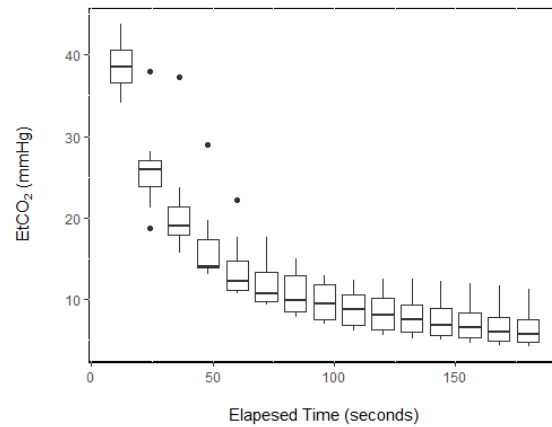


Figure 1 Boxplot series displaying the exponential decay of EtCO₂ as function of time, after induction of VF. (N = 144; 12 observations per time point x 12 timepoints)

Depths required to meet the physiological targets however, are considerably lower than the current guideline recommended depths of 50 to 60 mm. It is also worth noting that depths required to achieve the defined physiological cut-offs were also not in agreement. This reflects the conclusion of Steill et al, that an increase in CC depths is associated with better patient outcomes, however, the optimal depth of CC is still unknown [9].

One animal suffered extensive thoracic trauma as a result of receiving CC depths in excess of 45 mm. Complications due to this treatment included bleeding into the thorax, bleeding into the pericardial sac, bruised myocardium, bullae on the lungs and most severely ruptured atria. This highlights that a balanced approach to delivering safe and efficacious CC depth targets is required. This study demonstrated depths greater than 45 mm were acceptable for 11 of the 12 enrolled animals, however, one displayed irreversible damage as a result of this treatment. At what point are the CC depth targets considered safe for use on the human population? Upon visual inspection of the synchronized signals, it is apparent that EtCO₂ is a slow response variable, which does not reflect sudden changes in applied CC depth

5. Limitations

The investigation was a retrospective analysis of a previously obtained dataset. The objective of the original study did not match the objective of this post hoc analysis. Treatment was not randomized during the study. Depth of CC increased with each episode which may have an indirect impact on physiological response of the animal. As observed as part of the analysis, EtCO₂ had a decay artefact and requires a considerable amount of time to baseline, perhaps the 10-second interval between CC episodes would need extended to accommodate this.

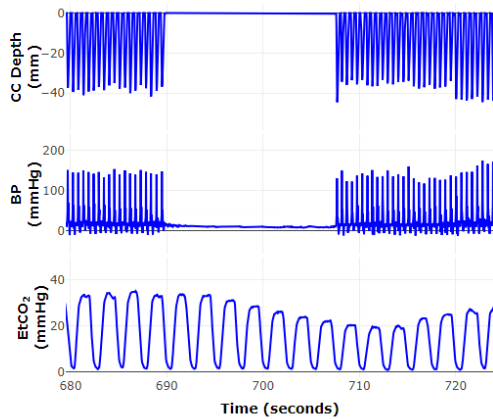


Figure 2 Representative time series plots of CC depth, BP and EtCO₂, demonstrating the slow response of EtCO₂ to sudden changes in CC depth

6. Conclusions

This investigation provides encouraging preliminary results indicating that CC depths recommended by AHA and ERC guidelines may be excessive. As this is a retrospective analysis further research is required to establish the relationship between animals for CC depth and the physiological endpoints of EtCO₂ and BP.

Conflicts of Interest

Olibhéar McAlister, Hannah Torney, Ben McCartney, Laura Davis and Adam Harvey are employees of HeartSine Technologies Ltd. Paul Crawford is a consultant veterinary anesthetist contracted by HeartSine Technologies Ltd.

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