

long-acting vasodilators would not be given intravenously to control blood pressure, which would be expected to decrease with the regional technique. Thus, it is possible that patients were put at some risk because of differences in initial treatment of high blood pressure.

The paper by Christopherson *et al.*² provides the initial analysis of outcomes from the study. Therefore, analysis in that paper is intentionally to treat. A second statistical analysis was performed in which the patients who were randomized to epidural anesthesia but who received general anesthesia were assigned to the general anesthesia group. Changing groups for these four patients did not alter any of the major outcomes of the trial.

The study by Rosenfeld *et al.*³ is not the primary analysis, and therefore, it is permissible to analyze by treatment administered rather than by randomization. Since Rosenfeld *et al.* were studying mechanisms of perioperative thrombosis, the most rational and appropriate analysis is by treatment administration rather than treatment assignment. This provides a more accurate assessment of anesthetic effects on changes in fibrinolysis.

Rose Christopherson, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Brian A. Rosenfeld, M.D.
Assistant Professor

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Factors Affecting Outcome in Patients Undergoing Peripheral Vascular Surgery: III

To the Editor:—The conclusion by Christopherson *et al.*¹ that “. . . epidural anesthesia is associated with a lower incidence of reoperation for inadequate tissue perfusion and therefore may be advantageous for this surgical population” is rather noncompelling. Of concern are the data in table 2 that demonstrate that above-the-ankle amputation was not decreased in a statistically significant manner in patients before discharge, nor was the 6-month vascular surgery outcome (amputation, regrafting, or thrombectomy) altered in patients who received epidural *versus* general anesthesia. Furthermore, the authors never state whether the patients were matched for the severity of their vascular disease.

In summary, I will find it very difficult to alter my clinical practice until more convincing data is forthcoming on the matter.

Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine
The Johns Hopkins Hospital
600 North Wolfe Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21287

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Lucy Waskell, M.D., Ph.D.
Anesthesiology Service (129)
Veterans Administration Medical Center
and University of California, San Francisco
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, California 94121

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