Dr. Thomas’s data should he or someone else choose to test this hypothesis with a controlled study similar in design to our own.

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REFERENCES


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Epidural Blood Patch for Post-lumbar-puncture Headache

To the Editor:—Ostheimer, Palahniuk, and Shnider state in their letter (ANESTHESIOLOGY 41:307, 1974) on epidural blood patch for treatment of post-lumbar-puncture headache that the epidural patch was applied an average of four days after the onset of headache. Their success rate was astonishing, especially as these were cases resistant to other means of treatment.

Post-spinal headache is rarely severe for more than five days. Indeed, Selvyn-Crawford assures the obstetric anesthetist that he can “virtually promise his unfortunate patient that . . . . it will have cleared by the 6th day”.1

Thus, the prediction that epidural patch, given about the fourth day after the onset of headache—which is the fifth day after the spinal tap—may be self-fulfilling.

Before the authors can prove the efficacy of epidural patch they must investigate its usefulness when given earlier, or, better yet, study a control series of patients treated with lumbar puncture without injection of blood into the epidural space.

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