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On the Acceleration of Epinephrine Absorption by Lidocaine

To the Editor—We were interested in the recent report by Ueda et al.1 describing the effect of lidocaine on the absorption of epinephrine. The authors compared 0.5% lidocaine containing 1:200,000 epinephrine with 1:200,000 epinephrine alone. No mention was made of how these solutions were prepared.

Moore2 has noted that commercially prepared local anesthetic solutions containing epinephrine have a low pH and are not as effective for vasoconstriction as freshly prepared solutions. Guyton3 states that low pH will cause vasodilation.

We found the pH of commercially available 0.5% lidocaine with 1:200,000 epinephrine (Astra) to be 3.78, whereas a 1:200,000 solution of epinephrine prepared by diluting 1:1000 epinephrine with preservative-free normal saline had a pH of 5. If Veda et al. used solutions made in this fashion, the pH differences alone may have been responsible for the variation in epinephrine uptake attributed to the lidocaine.

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