



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
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**Quality improvement: Efficacy of sodium picosulphate with magnesium citrate (Picolax) as bowel cleansing agent for colonoscopy in elderly patients**

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**Introduction**

Adequate bowel preparation is essential for a quality colonoscopy. Polyethylene glycol solution (PEG) is commonly used by HA hospital as the bowel cleansing agent before colonoscopic examination. However, due to the poor palatability of large volume PEG solution, some patients may not tolerate this cleansing method. In survey of elderly patients undergoing colonoscopy, more than 20% of bowel preparations were classified as "Poor" due to poor compliance to PEG solution. Sodium picosulphate with magnesium citrate (Picolax) is an alternative cleansing agent which was shown to be more tolerable and associated with lesser adverse effect than PEG. Therefore, we conducted a study on the use of Picolax as bowel cleansing agent in elderly patients undergoing colonoscopy.

**Objectives**

- 1) To compare the efficacy of Picolax versus PEG as bowel cleansing agent in elderly patients
- 2) To evaluate the tolerability of Picolax as bowel cleansing agent in elderly patients

**Methodology**

This is a prospective randomized study included elderly patients admitted for colonoscopy to Department of Medicine and Geriatrics, Tuen Mun Hospital during January 2012 to December 2012. All patients were randomly assigned to either Picolax (Study group) or PEG (Control group) as bowel cleansing agent before colonoscopy on 1:1 basis. The quality of bowel preparation was assessed by the endoscopist who was unaware of the method of preparation (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=satisfactory, 4=good). Patients were interviewed to determine the severity (1= none, 2= mild, 3= severe) of different types of discomfort (vomiting, sense of fullness, abdominal cramp and sleep disturbance) before the colonoscopy. Patient's acceptability of the taste of Picolax was also assessed.

**Result**

Sixty- two patients were participated in this study with mean age of 78.3 years old. There was no statistically significant difference found in the quality of bowel cleansing between both groups ( $p=0.735$ ). The 2 groups showed similar degree of discomfort

(mild). More than half (55%) of the patients claimed that the taste of Picolax was pleasant. Conclusion: This pilot study demonstrated that Picolax has similar efficacy and tolerability as PEG as a bowel cleansing agent in elderly patients. Picolax may be preferred to PEG as it has high patient acceptability.