Value of gas exchange recording at home in children receiving noninvasive ventilation
Osama Felemban, Karl Leroux, Guillaume Aubertin, Fabrice Miandy, Frederic Damagnez, Bruno Amorim, Adriana Ramirez, Brigitte Fauroux

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| Complete List of Authors: | Felemban, Osama; Faculty of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University, Pediatric department  
Leroux, Karl; ADEP Assistance  
Aubertin, Guillaume; AP-HP, Hôpital Armand-Trousseau, Pediatric Pulmonary Department  
Miandy, Fabrice; ADEP Assistance  
Damagnez, Frederic; ADEP Assistance  
Amorim, Bruno; ADEP Assistance  
Ramirez, Adriana; AP-HP, Hôpital Armand-Trousseau, Pediatric Pulmonary Department  
Fauroux, Brigitte; Armand Trousseau Hospital, Pediatric pulmonology and INSERM U 719 |
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Value of gas exchange recording at home in children receiving noninvasive ventilation

Osama Felemban\textsuperscript{1,2}, MD, Karl Leroux\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Guillaume Aubertin\textsuperscript{2}, MD, Fabrice Miandy\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Frédéric Damagnez\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Bruno Amorim\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Adriana Ramirez\textsuperscript{2}, AAS, Brigitte Fauroux\textsuperscript{2,4}, MD, PhD

\textsuperscript{1} University Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
\textsuperscript{2} AP-HP, Hôpital Armand Trousseau, Pediatric Pulmonary Department, Paris, France
\textsuperscript{3} ADEP Assistance, Suresnes, Paris, France
\textsuperscript{4} Université Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris 6 and INSERM UMR S-938, Paris, France

Correspondence to:
Pr. Brigitte Fauroux, MD, PhD
AP-HP, Hôpital Armand-Trousseau
Pediatric Pulmonary Department
Research unit INSERM UMR S-938
National reference center for rare lung diseases
Université Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris 6
26 avenue du Docteur Arnold-Netter
Paris, F-75012 France
Fax: +33 (0) 1 44 73 61 74
Tel: +33 (0) 1 44 73 67 18
Email: brigitte.fauroux@trs.aphp.fr

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Running head: Gas exchange during noninvasive ventilation

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Abstract

Noninvasive positive pressure ventilation (NPPV) is preferentially performed at home. The objectives of the study were to evaluate the feasibility of an overnight gas exchange recording at home and to compare recordings performed in the hospital and at home.

Twenty nine pairs of overnight gas exchange recordings during NPPV were performed at home and in the hospital in 11 children with neuromuscular disease and 13 children with other disorders treated with long term NPPV.

No technical problem occurred during the recordings performed at home and one pulse oximetry (SpO\textsubscript{2}) recording failed in the hospital. For the two groups, SpO\textsubscript{2} and transcutaneous carbon dioxide (PtcCO\textsubscript{2}) values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the home. However, correlations between SpO\textsubscript{2} and PtcCO\textsubscript{2} values obtained in the hospital and at home were better for mean values than for minimal and maximal values, and in patients with other disorders as compared to patients with neuromuscular disease.

Overnight gas exchange recordings with NPPV by a combined PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} monitor are feasible at home and show results comparable to hospital recordings. Home PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} recordings may be integrated in the care of children treated with domiciliary NPPV and are associated with less disruption of family life and decreased health care costs.

**Word count of the abstract:** 204

**Key words:** carbon dioxide, child, gas exchange, home, noninvasive positive pressure ventilation, pulse oximetry.
Introduction

Noninvasive positive pressure ventilation (NPPV) is increasingly used in children presenting various diseases which may cause alveolar hypoventilation such as neuromuscular or lung disease, thoracic deformities, severe upper airway obstruction, or disorders of ventilatory control. The main advantage of NPPV is that this technique may be used on demand, preferentially at night, with minimal disruption of normal life. After appropriate training of the family and caregivers, the majority of the children may be discharged home. Regular clinical and physiological follow up is necessary in order to adapt the NPPV modes and settings to the patient’s clinical status and growth, and to check any side effect or respiratory or maxillofacial complication.

We have recently demonstrated the importance of a systematic overnight combined pulse oximetry (SpO₂) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) recording, even in patients in a stable condition without any symptom or sign of alveolar hypoventilation. Indeed, 42% of 50 children who were well acclimatized to NPPV, without evidence of symptoms of sleep disordered breathing, were hypercapnic, defined by a maximal transcutaneous CO₂ (PtcCO₂) value > 50 mmHg during sleep. Most importantly, this nocturnal hypercapnia was not associated with nocturnal hypoxemia, defined by a minimal SpO₂ < 92%, or abnormal daytime blood gases in 36% of the patients.

Repeated overnight hospitalizations are associated with disruption of family life and increased health care costs. Because of a general reduction in number of pediatric hospital beds, the transfer of selected, programmed, and well-organized activities or investigations from the hospital to the home is strongly encouraged. However, the feasibility, defined by the ability to obtain technically acceptable
overnight recordings as well as the satisfaction of the parents with regard to their preference between hospital and home, and accuracy of these investigations performed in a home environment, should be evaluated before their wide spread use.

The aim of the present study was first to evaluate the feasibility of an overnight gas exchange recording by a combined transcutaneous CO\textsubscript{2} and pulse oximetry (PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2}) monitor at home, and second to compare the results and costs of recordings performed in the hospital and at home in a cohort of stable children, treated at home with long term NPPV.

Material and methods

Patients

Consecutive patients using nocturnal NPPV at home were enrolled during their routine follow up if 1) they were in a stable condition, with no respiratory exacerbation during the previous two months, 2) they were using NPPV for at least one month, and 3) they had no clinical symptoms of nocturnal hypoventilation such as frequent arousals, nocturnal agitation, or daytime fatigue and sleepiness. Exclusion criteria were 1) age less than one year because the ear clip of the PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} monitor is too large for small infants \textsuperscript{3}, 2) ear aplasia or hypoplasia for the same technical reasons \textsuperscript{3}, 3) dark skin because of inaccurate SpO\textsubscript{2} values, as has been observed with other devices \textsuperscript{4}, 4) impossibility to perform the hospital and home recording within one month, and 5) any change in the respiratory and/or clinical status of the patient.
All the parents, and if possible the patients, gave informed written consent for the study which was approved by the local ethical committee.

**Overnight PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} recording**

Two overnight PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} recordings were performed in a random order with the SenTec Digital Monitor (software version SMB SW-V06.10; MPB SW-V04.03) and the V-SignTM Sensor which was applied to the earlobe with a dedicated Ear Clip (SenTec AG, Therwil, Switzerland). This fully digital sensor combines the elements of an electrochemical Severinghaus-type CO\textsubscript{2} tension sensor with the optical elements of conventional SpO\textsubscript{2} sensors, thus providing a noninvasive and continuous PtcCO\textsubscript{2} and SpO\textsubscript{2} monitoring. The sensor is warmed to a constant surface temperature of 42°C to improve local arterialization of the measurement site. This PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} monitor has been validated for adults\textsuperscript{5} and for children in our laboratory\textsuperscript{3}.

The two overnight SpO\textsubscript{2} and PtcCO\textsubscript{2} recordings were started at the patient’s usual bedtime. In the hospital, care was taken to respect the patient’s sleep. Prior to the application of the sensor to the patient, the sensor was prepared by the nurse in the hospital and the technician at home and calibrated as per the manufacturer recommendations. The sensor was then applied by the nurse or the technician to the patient’s earlobe for 15 minutes, until the stabilization of the PtcCO\textsubscript{2} and SpO\textsubscript{2} values. Monitoring was then performed during at least 6 hours. In the hospital, sleep with NPPV as well as the correct positioning of the nasal mask and the ear clip was regularly checked by the attending nurse during the night. At home, the parents were asked to check these elements before they went to sleep and eventually a second
time during the night. The parents were taught how to remove the ear clip at awakening.

After the two recordings, the parents were asked: “Did your child sleep better in the hospital or at home?” and “Do you prefer a recording performed in the hospital or at home?”.

Analysis of the nocturnal gas exchange

For each overnight sleep study, the following data were calculated: duration of recording, mean and minimal SpO$_2$, percentage of night time spent with a SpO$_2$ > 95%, between 94 and 95%, between 93 and 92%, and < 92%; mean and maximal PtcCO$_2$, % of night time spent with a PtcCO$_2$ > 50 mm Hg and ≤ 50 mmHg.

Statistical analysis

The patients were separated into two groups; patients with neuromuscular diseases (n=11) and patients with other disorders (n=13). For each group and type of recording (hospital and home), the median value of mean and minimal SpO$_2$ and of mean and maximal PtcCO$_2$ was calculated because the values were not normally distributed. Comparison between the home and hospital recordings was performed by the Mann Whitney Rank Sum test.

Moreover, individual data were analyzed by plotting mean and minimal SpO$_2$ and mean and maximal PtcCO$_2$ observed in the hospital against the values obtained at home for each patient. Correlation between the values recorded at home and in the hospital was performed using simple linear regression. Statistical analyses were
done using the SigmaStat (Systat Software Inc., San Jose, California). Values of p<0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Results

Patients

Twenty four consecutive patients were included in the study with 5 patients having 2 series of hospital and home recording more than 3 months apart. Four patients with neuromuscular disease and one patient with another disorder had 2 pairs of recordings. The characteristics of the patients are given in Table 1.

Feasibility of home recording

Of the 29 recordings performed at home, one recording was technically correct but could not be analyzed because of an error on the date. The SpO$_2$ recording could not be analyzed in another patient in the hospital but the PtcCO$_2$ recording was exploitable. All the other recordings performed at home and in the hospital were correct and could be analyzed.

Comparison of home and hospital recordings

Despite randomization, only 4 recordings were initially performed at home and 25 in the hospital. The median delay between the hospital and home recordings was 11 (range 3-28) days in patients with neuromuscular disease and 7 (2-30) days in
patients with other disorders (p not significant (NS)). The median duration of the overnight PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} recording was comparable at home (503 minutes, range 360-609) and in the hospital (560 minutes, range 231-688, p=NS). Table 2 shows that the SpO\textsubscript{2} and PtcCO\textsubscript{2} values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the home. Moreover, the results were not different between the patients with neuromuscular disease and those with other disorders. Figure 1 shows the correlation of mean and minimal SpO\textsubscript{2} values in the hospital and at home for each patient. The correlation of mean SpO\textsubscript{2} in the hospital and at home was significant for patients with other disorders (r=0.608, p=0.028) but not for patients with neuromuscular diseases (r=0.494, p=0.061). For minimal SpO\textsubscript{2}, no significant correlation was observed for the two groups of patients (r=0.340, p=0.215 and r=0.547, p=0.053 for patients with neuromuscular disease and other diseases, respectively). Interestingly, 4 patients had a minimal SpO\textsubscript{2} below 90% in the hospital but not at home, and conversely, 9 patients had a minimal SpO\textsubscript{2} below 90% at home but not in the hospital. Figure 2 shows the percentage of time spent with the different SpO\textsubscript{2} ranges in the two groups of patients. Again, no significant differences were observed between the recordings performed in the hospital and at home in both groups of patients (t-test, all NS).

Figure 3 shows the correlation of mean and maximal PtcCO\textsubscript{2} values in the hospital and at home for each patient. The correlation of mean PtcCO\textsubscript{2} in the hospital and at home was significant in the two groups of patients (r=0.647, p=0.009, and r=0.562, p=0.037, for patients with neuromuscular disease and patients with other disorders, respectively). The correlation for maximal PtcCO\textsubscript{2} was significant for patients with other diseases (r=0.636, p=0.014) but not for patients with neuromuscular diseases (r=0.417, p=0.122). Figure 4 shows the percentage of time
spent with the different PtcCO$_2$ ranges in the two groups of patients. Again, no significant differences were observed between the recordings performed in the hospital and at home in both groups of patients (t-test, all NS).

According to the parents, they all found that their child slept better at home. With regard to the satisfaction of the parents, they all preferred the recording at home.

The cost of one overnight hospitalization in our pediatric pulmonology unit is 1029,00 euros. This cost should be compared to 2 technician home visits, one in the evening at the child’s bedtime and one in the morning (2 x 25,16 = 50,32 euros). The cost of the transport has to be added to this amount; the French health care system reimburses 20,09 euros per visit, which make a total of 90,50 euros per home monitoring.

The 5 patients who had persistent alveolar hypoventilation during both recordings, as defined by a maximal PtcCO$_2$ value > 50 mm Hg and/or a minimal SpO$_2$ value < 90% had one or several interventions in the hospital such as the change of the ventilatory settings or mode, the addition of an abdominal girdle or a chin strap, and/or the change of the interface. An overnight gas exchange control was performed systematically before discharge.

**Discussion**

This study is the first to show the feasibility of overnight PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$ recording in a group of children over the age of 4 years, treated at home with long term NPPV. Twenty eight of the 29 (97%) recordings were analyzable when a trained technician installed the equipment at home and instructed the parents how to
supervise the recording and remove the ear clip in the morning. SpO\textsubscript{2} and PtcCO\textsubscript{2} values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the home. However, a better correlation between hospital and home values was observed for mean values as compared to minimal and maximal values, and in patients with other disorders as compared to patients with neuromuscular disease. Of note, parent’s preference and cost favored home recording.

Different types of monitoring are routinely performed at home in children such as cardiorespiratory monitoring in children at risk for sudden infant death syndrome\textsuperscript{6-8}, pH monitoring for the diagnosis of gastro-oesophageal reflux\textsuperscript{9}, blood pressure monitoring\textsuperscript{10}, EEG monitoring\textsuperscript{11,12}, polygraphy for the screening of obstructive sleep apnea\textsuperscript{13-16}, and even telemonitoring of exhaled nitric oxide for asthmatic children\textsuperscript{17}.

We were initially relatively reluctant to the use of the PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} monitor at home because the device requires a correct calibration, the SignTM Sensor is quite fragile, and the correct positioning of the ear clip with the head gear for the NPPV may not be easy in a young child. Technically acceptable recordings were obtained in 75% to 99% of the cases during the above mentioned studies\textsuperscript{6-17}. However, no technical problem occurred at home during any of the 29 recordings in the present study. This may be explained by the adequate training of the technicians of the home care organization who installed the PtcCO\textsubscript{2}/SpO\textsubscript{2} monitor on the child at bed time, which requires thus a home visit outside office hours. However, this procedure seemed for us the guarantee of success.

Correlation between hospital and home recordings was better for mean SpO\textsubscript{2} and PtcCO\textsubscript{2} values than for minimal SpO\textsubscript{2} and maximal PtcCO\textsubscript{2}. This is easy understandable because a mean value is calculated over the whole recording period, and it thus less variable than an extreme value. We have no clear explanation for the
better correlation between hospital and home SpO2 and PtcCO2 values in patients with other diseases as compared to patients with neuromuscular diseases. A possible explanation could be that patients with other diseases, who are predominantly patients with upper airway obstruction, are more stable than patients with neuromuscular disease. In practice, minimal and maximal values should be interpreted with more caution than mean values when comparing hospital and home recordings.

A limitation of our study is the lack of data on objective sleep quality. Improved nocturnal gas exchange is not obligatory associated with better sleep quality. A parallel improvement in nocturnal gas exchange and sleep architecture during NPPV has been observed in adult patients in two studies but not in two others. A study establishing home polysomnography norms for children showed better sleep quantity and quality at home. Another study compared 2 sleep studies performed at home and in the hospital in 21 children aged 2-12 years with possible obstructive sleep apnea. Sleep efficiency was significantly greater and the arousal index was significantly lower at home than in the laboratory. Finally, a study that compared blood pressure monitoring at home and in the hospital also observed significant lower diastolic blood pressure at home, which supports a lower stress level when children are in their home environment.

Even if we observed a trend for better results during home recordings, this was not significant (Table 2). We may thus conclude that home recordings are feasible and may show results comparable to those obtained at hospital, justifying their integration in the routine management in children receiving long term NPPV. A regular and systematic check of the ventilator settings and circuit, the interface and its possible side effects, and also the potential problems that may occur during NPPV...
such as air leaks, are, to our opinion, important to document during an overnight observation in the hospital. As such, we would recommend a combination of home and hospital recordings, not only for the patient’s and parent’s comfort but also with regard to the familial and financial burden. Because individual data may be better in the home or in the hospital, we would recommend a change of NPPV settings or additional measures only in case of abnormal values in both conditions. Those patients with an abnormal “in home” gas exchange should be referred for an “in hospital” titration study.

In conclusion, overnight PtcCO2/SpO2 monitoring is feasible at home and shows comparable results to hospital recordings. Systematic and regular home monitoring, combined with regular hospital visits, is recommended in children treated at home with NPPV.

**Acknowledgments**

All the authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with the data presented in this manuscript.
References


Legend of the figures

Figure 1
Individual mean (left figure) and minimal (right figure) pulse oximetry (SpO₂) values observed at home and in the hospital in patients with neuromuscular disease (black circles) and with other disorders (open circles).

For mean SpO₂, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease (r=0.494, p=0.061) and dashed for patients with other disorders (r=0.608, p=0.028)). Several patients having similar SpO₂ values, only 15 of the 28 spots are visible.

For minimal SpO₂, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease (r=0.340, p=NS) and dashed for patients with other disorders (r=0.547, p=NS). Two patients having similar SpO₂ values, only 27 of the 28 spots are visible.

Figure 2
Comparison of percentage of nocturnal recording time spent with a pulse oximetry (SpO₂) > 95%, between 94 and 95%, between 93 and 92%, and < 92% during the recordings performed in the hospital (black bars) and at home (grey bars).

Figure 3
Individual mean (left figure) and maximal (right figure) transcutaneous carbon dioxide (PtcCO₂) values observed at home and in the hospital in patients with neuromuscular disease (black circles) and with other disorders (open circles).
For mean PtcCO$_2$, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease ($r=0.647$, $p=0.009$) and dashed for patients with other disorders ($r=0.564$, $p=0.037$))

For maximal PtcCO$_2$, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease ($r=0.417$, $p=\text{NS}$) and dashed for patients with other disorders ($r=0.636$, $p=0.014$).

Three patients having similar PtcCO$_2$ values, only 27 of the 29 spots are visible.

**Figure 4**

Comparison of percentage of nocturnal recording time spent with a PtcCO$_2$ > 50 mmHg and ≤ 50 mmHg during the recordings performed in the hospital (black bars) and at home (grey bars).
Value of gas exchange recording at home in children receiving noninvasive ventilation

Osama Felemban\textsuperscript{1, 2}, MD, Karl Leroux\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Guillaume Aubertin\textsuperscript{2}, MD, Fabrice Miandy\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Frédéric Damagnez\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Bruno Amorim\textsuperscript{3}, AAS, Adriana Ramirez\textsuperscript{2}, AAS, Brigitte Fauroux\textsuperscript{2, 4}, MD, PhD

\textsuperscript{1} University Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
\textsuperscript{2} AP-HP, Hôpital Armand Trousseau, Pediatric Pulmonary Department, Paris, France
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Correspondence to:
Pr. Brigitte Fauroux, MD, PhD
AP-HP, Hôpital Armand-Trousseau
Pediatric Pulmonary Department
Research unit INSERM UMR S-938
National reference center for rare lung diseases
Université Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris 6
26 avenue du Docteur Arnold-Netter
Paris, F-75012 France
Fax: +33 (0) 1 44 73 61 74
Tel: +33 (0) 1 44 73 67 18
Email: brigitte.fauroux@trs.aphp.fr

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Running head: Gas exchange during noninvasive ventilation

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Abstract

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Twenty nine pairs of overnight gas exchange recordings during NPPV were performed at home and in the hospital in 11 children with neuromuscular disease and 13 children with other disorders treated with long term NPPV.

No technical problem occurred during the recordings performed at home and one pulse oximetry (SpO₂) recording failed in the hospital. For the two groups, SpO₂ and transcutaneous carbon dioxide (PtcCO₂) values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the home. However, correlations between SpO₂ and PtcCO₂ values obtained in the hospital and at home were better for mean values than for minimal and maximal values, and in patients with other disorders as compared to patients with neuromuscular disease.

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Word count of the abstract: 204

Key words: carbon dioxide, child, gas exchange, home, noninvasive positive pressure ventilation, pulse oximetry.
Introduction

Noninvasive positive pressure ventilation (NPPV) is increasingly used in children presenting various diseases which may cause alveolar hypoventilation such as neuromuscular or lung disease, thoracic deformities, severe upper airway obstruction, or disorders of ventilatory control \(^1\)\(^2\). The main advantage of NPPV is that this technique may be used on demand, preferentially at night, with minimal disruption of normal life. After appropriate training of the family and caregivers, the majority of the children may be discharged home. Regular clinical and physiological follow up is necessary in order to adapt the NPPV modes and settings to the patient’s clinical status and growth, and to check any side effect or respiratory or maxillofacial complication.

We have recently demonstrated the importance of a systematic overnight combined pulse oximetry (SpO\(_2\)) and carbon dioxide (CO\(_2\)) recording, even in patients in a stable condition without any symptom or sign of alveolar hypoventilation \(^3\). Indeed, 42% of 50 children who were well acclimatized to NPPV, without evidence of symptoms of sleep disordered breathing, were hypercapnic, defined by a maximal transcutaneous CO\(_2\) (PtcCO\(_2\)) value > 50 mmHg during sleep. Most importantly, this nocturnal hypercapnia was not associated with nocturnal hypoxemia, defined by a minimal SpO\(_2\) < 92%, or abnormal daytime blood gases in 36% of the patients.

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The aim of the present study was first to evaluate the feasibility of an overnight gas exchange recording by a combined transcutaneous CO$_2$ and pulse oximetry (PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$) monitor at home, and second to compare the results and costs of recordings performed in the hospital and at home in a cohort of stable children, treated at home with long term NPPV.

**Material and methods**

**Patients**

Consecutive patients using nocturnal NPPV at home were enrolled during their routine follow up if 1) they were in a stable condition, with no respiratory exacerbation during the previous two months, 2) they were using NPPV for at least one month, and 3) they had no clinical symptoms of nocturnal hypoventilation such as frequent arousals, nocturnal agitation, or daytime fatigue and sleepiness. Exclusion criteria were 1) age less than one year because the ear clip of the PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$ monitor is too large for small infants, 2) ear aplasia or hypoplasia for the same technical reasons, 3) dark skin because of inaccurate SpO$_2$ values, as has been observed with other devices, 4) impossibility to perform the hospital and home recording within one month, and 5) any change in the respiratory and/or clinical status of the patient.
All the parents, and if possible the patients, gave informed written consent for the study which was approved by the local ethical committee.

**Overnight PtcCO₂/SpO₂ recording**

Two overnight PtcCO₂/SpO₂ recordings were performed in a random order with the SenTec Digital Monitor (software version SMB SW-V06.10; MPB SW-V04.03) and the V-Sign™ Sensor which was applied to the earlobe with a dedicated Ear Clip (SenTec AG, Therwil, Switzerland). This fully digital sensor combines the elements of an electrochemical Severinghaus-type CO₂ tension sensor with the optical elements of conventional SpO₂ sensors, thus providing a noninvasive and continuous PtcCO₂ and SpO₂ monitoring. The sensor is warmed to a constant surface temperature of 42°C to improve local arterialization of the measurement site. This PtcCO₂/SpO₂ monitor has been validated for adults⁵ and for children in our laboratory³.

The two overnight SpO₂ and PtcCO₂ recordings were started at the patient’s usual bedtime. In the hospital, care was taken to respect the patient’s sleep. Prior to the application of the sensor to the patient, the sensor was prepared by the nurse in the hospital and the technician at home and calibrated as per the manufacturer recommendations. The sensor was then applied by the nurse or the technician to the patient’s earlobe for 15 minutes, until the stabilization of the PtcCO₂ and SpO₂ values. Monitoring was then performed during at least 6 hours. In the hospital, sleep with NPPV as well as the correct positioning of the nasal mask and the ear clip was regularly checked by the attending nurse during the night. At home, the parents were asked to check these elements before they went to sleep and eventually a second
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in the hospital or at home?” and “Do you prefer a recording performed in the hospital
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Analysis of the nocturnal gas exchange

For each overnight sleep study, the following data were calculated: duration of
recording, mean and minimal SpO₂, percentage of night time spent with a SpO₂ >
95%, between 94 and 95%, between 93 and 92%, and < 92%; mean and maximal
PtCO₂, % of night time spent with a PtCO₂ > 50 mm Hg and ≤ 50 mmHg.

Statistical analysis

The patients were separated into two groups; patients with neuromuscular
diseases (n=11) and patients with other disorders (n=13). For each group and type of
recording (hospital and home), the median value of mean and minimal SpO₂ and of
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but could not be analyzed because of an error on the date. The SpO$_2$ recording could
not be analyzed in another patient in the hospital but the PtcCO$_2$ recording was
exploitable. All the other recordings performed at home and in the hospital were
correct and could be analyzed.

Comparison of home and hospital recordings

Despite randomization, only 4 recordings were initially performed at home and
25 in the hospital. The median delay between the hospital and home recordings was
11 (range 3-28) days in patients with neuromuscular disease and 7 (2-30) days in
patients with other disorders (p not significant (NS)). The median duration of the
overnight PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$ recording was comparable at home (503 minutes, range 360-
609) and in the hospital (560 minutes, range 231-688, p=NS). Table 2 shows that the
SpO$_2$ and PtcCO$_2$ values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the
home. Moreover, the results were not different between the patients with
neuromuscular disease and those with other disorders. Figure 1 shows the
correlation of mean and minimal SpO$_2$ values in the hospital and at home for each
patient. The correlation of mean SpO$_2$ in the hospital and at home was significant for
patients with other disorders (r=0.608, p=0.028) but not for patients with
neuromuscular diseases (r=0.494, p=0.061). For minimal SpO$_2$, no significant
correlation was observed for the two groups of patients (r=0.340, p=0.215 and
r=0.547, p=0.053 for patients with neuromuscular disease and other diseases,
respectively). Interestingly, 4 patients had a minimal SpO$_2$ below 90% in the hospital
but not at home, and conversely, 9 patients had a minimal SpO$_2$ below 90% at home
but not in the hospital. Figure 2 shows the percentage of time spent with the different
SpO$_2$ ranges in the two groups of patients. Again, no significant differences were
observed between the recordings performed in the hospital and at home in both
groups of patients (t-test, all NS).

Figure 3 shows the correlation of mean and maximal PtcCO$_2$ values in the
hospital and at home for each patient. The correlation of mean PtcCO$_2$ in the hospital
and at home was significant in the two groups of patients (r=0.647, p=0.009, and
r=0.562, p=0.037, for patients with neuromuscular disease and patients with other
diseases, respectively). The correlation for maximal PtcCO$_2$ was significant for
patients with other diseases (r=0.636, p=0.014) but not for patients with
neuromuscular diseases (r=0.417, p=0.122). Figure 4 shows the percentage of time
spent with the different PtcCO₂ ranges in the two groups of patients. Again, no significant differences were observed between the recordings performed in the hospital and at home in both groups of patients (t-test, all NS).

According to the parents, they all found that their child slept better at home. With regard to the satisfaction of the parents, they all preferred the recording at home.

The cost of one overnight hospitalization in our pediatric pulmonology unit is 1029,00 euros. This cost should be compared to 2 technician home visits, one in the evening at the child’s bedtime and one in the morning (2 x 25,16 = 50,32 euros). The cost of the transport has to be added to this amount; the French health care system reimburses 20,09 euros per visit, which make a total of 90,50 euros per home monitoring.

The 5 patients who had persistent alveolar hypoventilation during both recordings, as defined by a maximal PtcCO₂ value > 50 mm Hg and/or a minimal SpO₂ value < 90% had one or several interventions in the hospital such as the change of the ventilatory settings or mode, the addition of an abdominal girdle or a chin strap, and/or the change of the interface. An overnight gas exchange control was performed systematically before discharge.

Discussion

This study is the first to show the feasibility of overnight PtcCO₂/SpO₂ recording in a group of children over the age of 4 years, treated at home with long term NPPV. Twenty eight of the 29 (97%) recordings were analyzable when a trained technician installed the equipment at home and instructed the parents how to
supervise the recording and remove the ear clip in the morning. SpO$_2$ and PtcCO$_2$ values did not differ significantly between the hospital and the home. However, a better correlation between hospital and home values was observed for mean values as compared to minimal and maximal values, and in patients with other disorders as compared to patients with neuromuscular disease. Of note, parent’s preference and cost favored home recording.

Different types of monitoring are routinely performed at home in children such as cardiorespiratory monitoring in children at risk for sudden infant death syndrome 6-8, pH monitoring for the diagnosis of gastro-oesophageal reflux 9, blood pressure monitoring 10, EEG monitoring 11,12, polygraphy for the screening of obstructive sleep apnea 13-16, and even telemonitoring of exhaled nitric oxide for asthmatic children 17.

We were initially relatively reluctant to the use of the PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$ monitor at home because the device requires a correct calibration, the SignTM Sensor is quite fragile, and the correct positioning of the ear clip with the head gear for the NPPV may not be easy in a young child. Technically acceptable recordings were obtained in 75% to 99% of the cases during the above mentioned studies 6-17. However, no technical problem occurred at home during any of the 29 recordings in the present study. This may be explained by the adequate training of the technicians of the home care organization who installed the PtcCO$_2$/SpO$_2$ monitor on the child at bed time, which requires thus a home visit outside office hours. However, this procedure seemed for us the guarantee of success.

Correlation between hospital and home recordings was better for mean SpO$_2$ and PtcCO$_2$ values than for minimal SpO$_2$ and maximal PtcCO$_2$. This is easy understandable because a mean value is calculated over the whole recording period, and it thus less variable than an extreme value. We have no clear explanation for the
better correlation between hospital and home SpO₂ and PtcCO₂ values in patients with other diseases as compared to patients with neuromuscular diseases. A possible explanation could be that patients with other diseases, who are predominantly patients with upper airway obstruction, are more stable than patients with neuromuscular disease. In practice, minimal and maximal values should be interpreted with more caution than mean values when comparing hospital and home recordings.

A limitation of our study is the lack of data on objective sleep quality. Improved nocturnal gas exchange is not obligatory associated with better sleep quality. A parallel improvement in nocturnal gas exchange and sleep architecture during NPPV has been observed in adult patients in two studies but not in two others. A study establishing home polysomnography norms for children showed better sleep quantity and quality at home. Another study compared 2 sleep studies performed at home and in the hospital in 21 children aged 2-12 years with possible obstructive sleep apnea. Sleep efficiency was significantly greater and the arousal index was significantly lower at home than in the laboratory. Finally, a study that compared blood pressure monitoring at home and in the hospital also observed significant lower diastolic blood pressure at home, which supports a lower stress level when children are in their home environment.

Even if we observed a trend for better results during home recordings, this was not significant (Table 2). We may thus conclude that home recordings are feasible and may show results comparable to those obtained at hospital, justifying their integration in the routine management in children receiving long term NPPV. A regular and systematic check of the ventilator settings and circuit, the interface and its possible side effects, and also the potential problems that may occur during NPPV
such as air leaks, are, to our opinion, important to document during an overnight observation in the hospital. As such, we would recommend a combination of home and hospital recordings, not only for the patient’s and parent’s comfort but also with regard to the familial and financial burden. Because individual data may be better in the home or in the hospital, we would recommend a change of NPPV settings or additional measures only in case of abnormal values in both conditions. Those patients with an abnormal “in home” gas exchange should be referred for an “in hospital” titration study.

In conclusion, overnight PtcCO₂/SpO₂ monitoring is feasible at home and shows comparable results to hospital recordings. Systematic and regular home monitoring, combined with regular hospital visits, is recommended in children treated at home with NPPV.

Acknowledgments

All the authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with the data presented in this manuscript.
References


Legend of the figures

Figure 1
Individual mean (left figure) and minimal (right figure) pulse oximetry (SpO\textsubscript{2}) values observed at home and in the hospital in patients with neuromuscular disease (black circles) and with other disorders (open circles).

For mean SpO\textsubscript{2}, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease (r=0.494, p=0.061) and dashed for patients with other disorders (r=0.608, p=0.028)). Several patients having similar SpO\textsubscript{2} values, only 15 of the 28 spots are visible.

For minimal SpO\textsubscript{2}, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease (r=0.340, p=NS) and dashed for patients with other disorders (r=0.547, p=NS). Two patients having similar SpO\textsubscript{2} values, only 27 of the 28 spots are visible.

Figure 2
Comparison of percentage of nocturnal recording time spent with a pulse oximetry (SpO\textsubscript{2}) > 95%, between 94 and 95%, between 93 and 92%, and < 92% during the recordings performed in the hospital (black bars) and at home (grey bars).

Figure 3
Individual mean (left figure) and maximal (right figure) transcutaneous carbon dioxide (PtcCO\textsubscript{2}) values observed at home and in the hospital in patients with neuromuscular disease (black circles) and with other disorders (open circles).
For mean PtcCO$_2$, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease ($r=0.647$, $p=0.009$) and dashed for patients with other disorders ($r=0.564$, $p=0.037$)).

For maximal PtcCO$_2$, regression lines are represented (plain for patients with neuromuscular disease ($r=0.417$, $p=\text{NS}$) and dashed for patients with other disorders ($r=0.636$, $p=0.014$)).

Three patients having similar PtcCO$_2$ values, only 27 of the 29 spots are visible.

**Figure 4**

Comparison of percentage of nocturnal recording time spent with a PtcCO$_2 > 50$ mmHg and $\leq 50$ mmHg during the recordings performed in the hospital (black bars) and at home (grey bars).
Table 1: Characteristics of the patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>10 (4-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male / Female</td>
<td>17 / 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary disease</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuromuscular disease</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lung disease</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upper airway obstruction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>central hypoventilation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of NPPV (months)</td>
<td>20 (3-62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ventilatory mode</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC/VT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilevel positive pressure</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interface</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industrial nasal mask</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industrial face mask</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>custom made nasal mask</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data are given as median (range).

Abbreviations: NPPV: noninvasive positive pressure ventilation, AC/VT: assist control / volume targeted ventilation, PS: pressure support ventilation.
Table 2: Results of the recordings performed in the hospital and at home in the patients with neuromuscular disease and those with other disorders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recordings in patients with neuromuscular disease n=15</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Recordings in patients with other disorders n=14</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospital recordings</td>
<td>Home recordings</td>
<td>Hospital recordings</td>
<td>Home recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median value of the individual mean SpO$_2$ (%)</td>
<td>98 (94-99)</td>
<td>98 (97-100)</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>96 (93-99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median value of the individual minimal SpO$_2$ (%)</td>
<td>91 (82-97)</td>
<td>94 (75-97)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>91 (80-93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median value of the individual mean PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)</td>
<td>40 (32-51)</td>
<td>40 (32-51)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>45 (37-53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median value of the individual maximal PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)</td>
<td>48 (37-62)</td>
<td>45 (37-56)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>49 (41-60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data are expressed as median (range).
SpO$_2$: pulse oximetry, PtcCO$_2$: transcutaneous carbon dioxide.
Figure 1

Hospital recording mean $\text{SpO}_2$ (%) vs. Home recording mean $\text{SpO}_2$ (%)

Hospital recording minimal $\text{SpO}_2$ (%) vs. Home recording minimal $\text{SpO}_2$ (%)
Figure 2

Patients with neuromuscular diseases

Patients with other diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpO₂&lt;95%</th>
<th>94-95%</th>
<th>92-93%</th>
<th>&lt; 92%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of night time
Figure 3

Hospital recording mean PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)

Home recording mean PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)

Hospital recording maximal PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)

Home recording maximal PtcCO$_2$ (mmHg)
Figure 4

Patient with neuromuscular diseases

Patient with other diseases

PtcCO₂ > 50 mmHg  PtcCO₂ ≤ 50 mmHg

PtcCO₂ > 50 mmHg  PtcCO₂ ≤ 50 mmHg