Acute Renal Failure in Tetanus: Authors' Reply

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To the Editor: We thank the authors for their letter, which has shed additional light on the issues related to management of tetanus.

- The dose of diazepam (50 mg/kg/d) used in the patient was not at all “very high”, previous experience with such high doses exists, and the same is in use by our tetanus unit [1–3].
- There has been some concern raised about propylene glycol toxicity in patients receiving diazepam and lorazepam. We were aware of this possibility, but as normal serum levels of propylene glycol are not described and also facilities for measurement are not routinely available, confirmation is difficult and it can be considered as one of the diagnostic possibilities in the patient [4]. However, in an observational study on propylene toxicity, 2/3rd of the patients developing this problem were chronic alcohol abusers, thereby raising the possibility that altered metabolic pathways are responsible for the toxicity [4].
- Magnesium sulfate has been suggested to be of benefit in reducing requirement for other drugs to control muscle spasms and cardiovascular instability in Adult patients with tetanus [5]. However, a more recent meta-analysis suggested the need for more controlled trials to assess the effect of magnesium sulphate on reducing autonomic instability, spasms, duration of intensive care and hospital stays and the need for mechanical ventilation [6].
- The slightly increased creatinine in the range of mild acute kidney injury (AKI) could very well be due to almost absent oral intake since the onset of tetanus. Early and

aggressive fluid resuscitation to restore renal perfusion and increase urine flow is the standard management and was done in this patient also. Due to the restriction on the word-limit, it is sometimes difficult to provide minute details of the case, except for the most relevant ones.

- The cited ‘consensus statement’ is infact a ‘qualitative’ review [7], and the authors state that there is little evidence other than from animal studies, retrospective observational studies, and case series to support the routine use of bicarbonate-containing fluids.

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