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Smith, Neil David, Abernethy, Caroline, Allgar, Victoria orcid.org/0000-0002-5228-2623 et al. (3 more authors) (2019) An Open label, Randomised Controlled trial on the effectiveness of the Orve+ Wrap® versus Forced Air Warming in restoring normothermia in the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit. *Journal of clinical nursing*. ISSN 0962-1067

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15159>

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Title Page

An Open label, Randomised Controlled trial on the effectiveness of the Orve+ Wrap[®] versus Forced Air Warming in restoring normothermia in the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit.

Orve+ Wrap[®] for post-operative warming.

Neil David Smith,¹ Caroline Abernethy,² Victoria Allgar,³ Louise Foster,² Victoria Martinson,² and Elizabeth Stones,²

1. Honorary Research Nurse, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Hull, UK, 2. Research Nurse, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Hull, UK, 3. Senior Statistician, Hull and York Medical School, York, UK.

Corresponding Author

Neil Smith neil.smith@hey.nhs.uk

HICU1,

Hull Royal Infirmary,

Anlaby Road,

Hull, HU3 2JZ, UK.

Tel 07834852024

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr A Gratrix, Dr J Pettit and Prof M Loubani, along with all the PACU nurses, anaesthetists and surgeons for their help and commitment in delivering this study.

Competing Interests

All authors declare no competing interests.

Funding

The delivery of this research was supported by the Yorkshire and Humber Clinical Research Network.

Orve+wrap[®] blankets and a small restrictive grant was provided by Orvec International Ltd, manufacturers of the Orve+wrap[®] they had no input in the study design, conduct or publication.

The Spot On[®] monitors were provided free of charge from 3M however, the probes were purchased as per normal NHS routes.

This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as [doi: 10.1111/JOCN.15159](https://doi.org/10.1111/JOCN.15159)

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MR. NEIL SMITH (Orcid ID : 0000-0002-2598-9965)

Article type : Original Article

An Open label, Randomised Controlled trial on the effectiveness of the Orve+ Wrap® versus Forced Air Warming in restoring normothermia in the Post Anaesthetic Care Unit.

Abstract:

Aims and objectives

This study aims to determine the clinical effectiveness and safety of the Orve+Wrap® thermal blanket.

Background

Inadvertent peri-operative hypothermia is a common problem in Post Anaesthetic Care Units and can have significant effects on patients' post-operative morbidity. Despite its commercial availability there is no clinical evidence on the effectiveness of Orve+Wrap®.

Design

A single centre prospective, open label, non-inferiority randomized controlled trial.

Methods

Post-operative hypothermic (35.0°C – 35.9°C) patients who had undergone elective surgery were randomised to receive either Orve+Wrap® or Forced Air Warming for the during their PACU stay. Patient temperatures we recorded every 10 minutes using Zero Heat Flux Thermometry. This study is reported using CONSORT Extension checklist for non-inferiority and equivalence trials.

Results

Between December 2016 and October 2018, 129 patients were randomised to receive either Orve+wrap® blanket, (n=65, 50.3%) or Forced Air Warming, (n= 64, 49.7%). The mean 60-minute

post-operative temperature of patients receiving Orve+wrap® blanket was 36.2°C and 36.3°C for the patients receiving Forced Air Warming. The predefined non-inferiority margin of a mean difference in temperature of 0.3°C, was not reached between the groups at 60 minutes. Additionally, there were no statistical differences between adverse event rates across these groups.

Conclusions

In the context of this study warming patients with the Orve+wrap® was non-inferior to Forced Air Warming. There were comparable rates of associated post-operative consequences of warming (shivering, hypotension, arrhythmias or surgical site infections), between the groups.

Relevance to clinical practice

The Orve+wrap® potentially provides an alternative warming method to Forced Air Warming for patients requiring short term post-operative warming. However, there are still a number of unknowns regarding the Orve+wrap® performance and further exploration is required.

This study was prospectively registered on the ISCRTN database (ISRCTN11563874).

Keywords: Body Temperature; Orthopaedics; Post-Operative Care; Postoperative Sequelae; Randomised Controlled Trials; Temperature Measurement.

Main Text

Introduction

Inadvertent peri-operative hypothermia, core temperature below 36°C, remains a common occurrence in clinical practice (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE], 2008; Karalapillai et al. 2013). In addition, NICE guidance (2008) recommends targeting a normal temperature range of between 36.5°C and 37.5°C for adult patients, except when otherwise clinically indicated.

The risk of developing inadvertent peri-operative hypothermia varies widely (Alderson et al., 2014; Al-Qahtani & Messahel, 2014; Harper et al., 2008) but has been found to be as high as 73.5% in a cohort of Orthopaedic patients (Kiekkas et al., 2005). It is precipitated by exposure of the skin and internal organs, ambient use of fluids and gases; combined with the use of sedatives and anaesthetic agents inhibiting the physiological response to cold (Alderson et al., 2014). Those most susceptible

include the elderly, patients with cancer and chronic conditions, burn victims and patients with thyroid dysfunction (Warttig et al., 2014).

The sequelae of peri-operative hypothermia can result in an increased morbidity (Billeter et al., 2014), including cardiac complications (Sessler, 2001), higher blood transfusion rates (Rajagopalan et al., 2008) and the delaying of wound healing leading to increased risk of surgical site infections (Melling et al., 2001).

Whilst avoidance of hypothermia is desirable, it is often difficult to achieve. Therefore, the institution of techniques to rewarm the patient promptly are essential to minimize potential complications, whilst at the same time ensuring interventions are well tolerated and effective.

Background

There are two different approaches to rewarming. Active warming; comprising of the application of an external heat source i.e. Forced Air Warming (FAW) and underbody resistive heating.

Alternatively, passive rewarming consists of thermal insulation, whereby the heat generated from the patient is conserved to enable rewarming to occur i.e. additional cotton blankets or reflective blankets. Currently two Cochrane systematic reviews (Alderson et al., 2014, Warttig et al., 2014) found no clear evidence of the warming effects of thermal insulation on core temperature during surgery or in the post-operative period resulting in advocating the use of Forced Air Warming.

One new passive warming device is the Orve+wrap[®] thermal insulation blanket (Orvecare[®], Kingston Upon Hull, UK) (Figure 1). The Orve+wrap[®] is a Class I medical device, comprised of a foil blanket in combination with a fleece lining. Under laboratory conditions it has demonstrated the ability to absorb and retain heat providing effective insulation [Data on file]. The Orve+wrap[®] blanket can be used from ambient temperature or prewarmed in a blanket warmer and the manufacturers currently advocate its use in pre-hospital, hospital, survival and veterinary applications. There are currently no randomised controlled trials on the effectiveness of the Orve+wrap[®] in a clinical environment or direct comparisons against other warming devices.

With a paucity of evidence of the Orve+wrap's[®] clinical performance, an assessment of the Orve+wrap's[®] predicted performance is based on the balance of laboratory data supplied by the manufacturer [Data on file] and the results of a Cochrane review (Alderson et al., 2014), which highlighted 0.5 -1.0°C higher mean temperatures in patient who received Forced Air Warming compared with passive warming devices. As a result, we hypothesise that there will be no clinically

important difference between patient's temperatures at 60 minutes for patients receiving either the Orve+wrap® or Forced Air Warming.

Methods

We conducted a single centre, parallel design, stratified, open label, non-inferiority, randomised controlled trial. The protocol was reviewed by the National Research and Ethics Service, (XXXXXX committee (XX/XX/XXXX) and registered on the ISCRTN database (ISRCTN11563874). In addition, patient and public review of the protocol was undertaken by the Trans Humber Consumer Research Panel.

The study was performed at Hospital, Town (blinding requested for peer review), United Kingdom between December 2016 and October 2018. Adult patients (≥ 16 years) planned for major (>90 minutes) surgery were screened from elective theatre lists, initially from 8 Orthopaedic and latterly 3 Cardiothoracic surgeons. Patients were excluded if they were unable to provide informed consent, had known thyroid dysfunction, already participating in a conflicting research study and unable to understand English language.

Post-surgery, immediately on admission to a Post Anaesthetic Care Unit (PACU), a non-invasive Zero Heat Flux (ZHF) temperature sensor (SpotOn™, 3M, Bracknell, UK) was used to measure the patients' temperature (after a period of sensor stabilisation), with placement on the patient's lateral forehead. The patient's corresponding tympanic temperature (Genius 3, Cardinal Health, Dublin) was also taken as part of standard care.

Patients were randomised to receive either a warmed Orve+wrap® blanket or a Forced Air Warming blanket, if their temperature was between 35.0°C and 35.9°C. Patients outside of this temperature range were managed as per normal local practice and not randomised into the study.

Randomisation occurred on a 1:1 basis, using permuted blocks of 4, 6 and 8 with stratification for age (16 to 64 years and ≥ 65 years) and anaesthesia type (General and Spinal \pm sedation) via a web-based generation software (Sealed Envelope™, London, UK) and was performed by a Research Nurse at the bedside.

Post randomisation, patients in the intervention group received an Orve+wrap® blanket directly to the skin that had been warmed in a blanket warmer (Kingfisher, LTE Scientific, Oldham) set at 50°C, this was then covered with a single cotton sheet.

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Patients in the control arm were warmed using either a Warm Touch™ WT 6000 or Warm Touch™ 5300 warming unit (Covidien, Minneapolis, USA) with a Warm Touch™ full body warming blanket (Covidien, Minneapolis, USA) and covered with a single cotton sheet.

Patients then had their temperature recorded every 10 minutes with the ZHF thermometry and tympanic probe, up to and including discharge from PACU. Any evidence of shivering, clinically significant hypotension and bradycardia, new arrhythmias and bleeding were identified and recorded as adverse events.

Ambient PACU temperature was recorded for the duration of the PACU stay for all randomised patients using a calibrated LogTag® TRID30-7 (LogTag®, Auckland, New Zealand). All temperature measurement devices were regularly maintained and calibrated throughout the course of the study in line with existing organisational procedures.

At discharge from PACU to ward based care, all subsequent treatments were at the discretion of the ward-based team. Patients were followed up until 7 days post-surgery or discharge from hospital; whichever occurred first.

The primary objective of this study was to determine whether the Orve+wrap® was non inferior to Forced Air Warming when warming hypothermic patients. The primary outcome measure was mean temperature difference at 60 minutes post PACU admission. Secondary outcomes included PACU and hospital length of stay and the prevalence of all the adverse events including the severity of any post-operative shivering, which was graded 0-4 using Crossley and Mahajan's shivering assessment tool, (1994).

There are limited contemporaneous studies exploring thermal insulation blankets against a Forced Air Warming device. In calculating the sample size, we used local unpublished temperature audit data indicating a standard deviation of 0.5, a non-inferiority limit of 0.3°C was set based on what was deemed to be clinically relevant. A power analysis was conducted which determined that 102 patients (51 per group) were required to ensure that the lower limit of the confidence interval about the mean difference between the two groups, fell within the 95% confidence interval of zero. In addition, we accounted for a potential 25% drop out of randomised patients who fail to reach the 60 minutes primary outcome point in PACU due to; return to theatre, subsequent admission to critical care, refusal to use the blanket or withdrawal of consent. In total we aimed to randomise 128 patients into the study.

The primary outcome was patient body temperature which was measured at 10-minute intervals post PACU admission. It was planned that the key dependent variable would be patients' temperature at 60 minutes. However, it was recognised that temperature on admission to PACU could influence the temperature at 60 minutes, therefore admission temperature was treated as a covariate. Accordingly, analysis using ANCOVA was used to account for this admission temperature covariate, when comparing Orve+wrap[®] with Forced Air Warming.

Chi-squared tests were used to compare the categorical data between groups for the adverse events. A p-value <0.05 was used to indicate statistical significance. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Version 22, IBM, Portsmouth, UK). This study is reported using the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) Extension checklist for non-inferiority and equivalence trials (See Supplementary File 1).

Results

Five hundred and three patients were assessed for suitability for the study from which 281 consented to participate (see Figure 2),

One Hundred and Twenty-Nine patients were randomized into the two groups. However, one patient was excluded from analysis due to the retrospective identification of pre-existing thyroid dysfunction. The split between surgical specialties was 96% (n=123) Orthopaedic and 4% (n= 5) Cardiothoracic. The patients' baseline characteristics are displayed in Table 1.

The crude mean difference in temperature at each of the 10 minutes intervals for the first 60 minutes is shown in Figure 3, with this difference between the groups remaining within 0.1°C, throughout the first hour of observations.

Patient mean temperatures at 60 minutes post warming device placement between Orve+wrap[®] (n=30) with Forced Air Warming (n=32), when adjusted for patients' temperature on arrival to PACU, showed no statistical difference (p=0.748) between the mean differences (Table 2). Furthermore, Figure 4 demonstrates the mean difference of 0.040°C and the associated 95% Confidence intervals (CI :0.206,0.286) in relation to the predefined non inferiority margin.

Regarding the safety aspects of the devices during patients' PACU stay there was a low instance of issues observed, with post-operative shivering the most common. There was no statistical difference between groups noted in any of the adverse event (Table 3). Patient stay data (Table 4)

demonstrated a statistically shorter length of PACU stay for those patients who received Orve+wrap® post operatively, 67.3 mins (22.59) vs 80.2 (44.36). This however did not translate to a shorter post-surgery length of hospital stay. The application of the warming device was slower in the Forced Air Warming group, with the time taken to place the Forced Air Warming device being significantly longer from the point at which the baseline Spot On™ temperature demonstrated hypothermia (Table 5). This translated into a statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) overall longer duration for Forced Air Warming device placement from admission into PACU.

Discussion

This study represents the first direct comparison of the Orve+ wrap® in a randomized controlled trial against any other warming device. The study is unique in that it compares a new passive warming blanket with Forced Air Warming, which Alderson et al (2014) describe as the current advocated “gold standard” treatment for post-operative hypothermia.

For the primary outcome, the predefined non inferiority criteria, of a temperature difference of less than 0.3°C at 60 minutes, was observed. However, due to the insufficient number of patients who had evaluable data at the 60 minutes timepoint and based on our power calculator, there is a clear risk that these results are underpowered to determine any difference at the 60-minute warming timepoint. This is despite accounting for a 25% dropout rate prior to 60 minutes. Failure to achieve this threshold is attributed partially to the period of time taken for the ZHF thermometry to calibrate after being placed on the participant and the subsequent delay in the placement of warming devices.

In this study, only 60% of participants spent 60 minutes or more in PACU, in hindsight examination of the primary endpoint at an earlier timepoint may have been more clinically appropriate. Supporting this is the evidence from the planned secondary outcomes analysis of the 10-minute warming intervals which indicate no statistical difference throughout the first 60 minutes. In the initial stages after warming begins there appears to be a small non statistically significant trend towards improved warming with the Orve+ wrap® (Table 2, Figure 3). We believe this is as result of stored heat in the blanket acquired from the blanket warmer being transferred to the patient, as this improvement appears to plateau at 20 minutes, potentially reflecting when the point at which the Orve+ wrap® has lost all its stored heat and primarily works through insulation.

The selection of a mean difference of 0.3°C as the non-inferiority was chosen based on the accuracy of the available thermometry techniques ($\pm 0.25^\circ\text{C}$) alongside what was felt would be clinically

relevant for practitioners to change clinical practice. This is supported by existing data demonstrating a 0.5 – 1.0°C higher mean temperature in Forced Air Warming compared with other passive warming devices (Alderson et al., 2014). In practice however, absolute thresholds, alongside patients' clinical or sensorial status are used to initiate warming measures i.e. (temperature <36°C or patients feeling cold). In the absence of data on practitioners' perspectives of clinically relevant warming differences and the evidence presented by Alderson et al (2014), it may be that a larger inferiority margin would have provided both clinically and statistically convincing findings.

These results are consistent with historic data using this outcome measure which also showed minimal impact of Forced Air Warming after 60 minutes of warming (Summers et al., 1990; Ereth et al., 1992). In the absence of a Core Outcome set for this group of patients, the use of this measure as a primary outcome may be flawed and alternative measures such as time to normothermia may provide more patient focused indicators of blanket performance. In hindsight, on this basis we believe that a study with adequate power at 60 minutes, and an appropriate primary outcome measure or non-inferiority margin, it would be likely to demonstrate the Orve+ wrap® non inferiority to Forced Air Warming.

Whilst this study was not powered to identify any changes between the groups with regards to the post-operative adverse events; it is reassuring to see comparable incidence in this study. Of note is the incidence of surgical site infections (SSI); we used a pragmatic definition to determine the presence of SSI; "any non-prophylactic antibiotic use for suspected wound infection prior to hospital discharge". In both arms there were no surgical site infections during the initial hospital stay. Data for England identifies around a 0.6% incidence of SSI for comparable orthopaedic procedures to those undertaken in this study, with a median onset date of around 17-20 days (Public Health England, 2018). In our study the intra-operative warming methods were not protocolised and a mixture of methods were used including Forced Air Warming. With mixed opinions and evidence (Kellam, Dieckmann and Austin, 2013) on the use and impact of Forced Air Warming during surgery, the decision for its use was at the discretion of the surgeon and anaesthetist. The absence of SSI infections in the study is promising, but not surprising based on current SSI rates and an observed shorter mean length of stay in this study than the observed median days for onset of SSI in England.

The prevalence of postoperative hypothermia in this study was 62% which corresponds well with previous data (Alderson et al., 2014; Al-Qahtani & Messahel, 2014; Harper et al., 2008). Highlighting that despite recent efforts and techniques for pre and intraoperative warming, temperature management in the post-operative phase remains as important. In view of current guidance for managing inadvertent perioperative hypothermia and the lack of clinical data on the efficacy of the

Orve+wrap® this study focuses on a narrow but clinically relevant temperature window (35.0 - 35.9°C). Accordingly, these data only reflect patients in the post-operative period, and it is unknown how the device would perform on patients presenting with temperatures outside this range or in different contexts.

NICE guidance (NICE, 2016) recommends direct measurement of temperature in the perioperative phase, which include distal oesophagus, rectum, urinary bladder and ZHF. To generate the primary outcome data for this study ZHF was used to measure temperature in this study. Whilst not widely adopted in the UK the use of the 3m Spot On™ probes, ZHF thermometry was based on a growing body of evidence describing increased accuracy and reduced variability, compared with other means of thermometry, whilst also being an acceptable and risk-free approach in awake patients, NICE, 2017; Eshraghi et al., 2014; Boisson et al., 2018; Arunachalam, Akehurst and Eitel, 2015). We found close agreement between the mean first Spot On™ and tympanic temperature measurements but a higher degree of variation in the tympanic measurements. The possibility of a larger variance between the two thermometry methods is possible through different temperature ranges and the influence of the thermometry equipment on these outcomes should not be underestimated.

There are several limitations to this study; firstly, we observed a statistically significant longer PACU length of stay for the Forced Air Warming group; this may have been due to the extended time taken to remove the warming equipment in the Forced Air Warming, however this it is unlikely to explain the entire delay. Alternatively, despite randomisation, there may have been non-clinical reasons that contributed to delays in PACU discharge that were not controlled for in this study, such as a lack of surgical ward beds for patients to be transferred to. This increased mean length of stay may be also be related to a number of outliers in the Forced Air Warming group, as the seven longest PACU stays were all in patients who had Forced Air Warming.

Secondly the nature of the interventions resulted in the inability to blind PACU staff to the randomization, for this reason we are unable to unequivocally determine that specific outcomes have not been influenced by bias, such as the earlier discharge of patients. The novel and open usage of the Orve+wrap® could have led to the possibility of performance bias on the part of the nurses caring for patients, where they either consciously or subconsciously were more proactive in discharging these patients earlier. This bias may be attributed to the steeper warming trajectory of the Orve+wrap® group which primed the PACU nurses for the potential discharge.

Finally, it also took longer to commence the Forced Air Warming placing the Orve+wrap® on the patients. It is conceivable that this setup delay for Forced Air Warming was exclusively related to the

practicality of delivering Forced Air Warming i.e. locating a warming unit, accessing a suitable power source and connecting hoses to blankets, rather than any deliberate delay to start therapy. This is reinforced by the higher variability in the mean duration of Forced Air Warming placement, suggesting that the Orve+wrap[®] warming was more straight forward to initiate. The impact of this real-world delay of instigating Forced Air Warming is unclear in this study but may have resulted in underperformance of the Forced Air Warming. The incorporation of User Acceptability Testing with the healthcare professionals in this study for both devices would have helped highlight the Orve+wraps[®] clinical utility.

In summary when evaluating against mean patient temperature at 60 minutes, this study demonstrates the Orve+wrap[®] non-inferiority to Forced Air Warming in the post-operative phase in conditions described here. Alongside this during the patients' PACU stay the adverse event rates were low and were statistically not significantly different; demonstrating the safety of the Orve+wrap[®] in the post-operative period. The advantages of the Orve+wrap[®] blankets is that they appear to be quick to apply to the patient and that numerous blankets only require a single heat source to "charge" with heat. However, their effectiveness without preheating still requires further exploration.

Relevance to clinical practice.

This study adds useful clinical data to the use of the Orve+wrap[®] blanket. It provides health care practitioners with information on its utility in a post-operative setting and whilst efforts to reduce the incidence of intraoperative and subsequent post-operative hypothermia should be prioritised, the availability of the Orve+wrap[®] increases the options available to practitioners in warming and keeping patients warm.

However, recommendations for future explorations of the Orve+wrap[®] blanket should include the efficacy for the whole duration of the peri-operative period, efficacy in different patient populations, alongside health economic evaluations, ensuring the device is cost effective compared to other patient warming interventions. Additionally, due to its low-tech design, explorations into its use in low income countries and those with limited access to reliable electricity sources may provide far reaching opportunities for Orve+wrap[®] clinical utility.

What does this paper contribute to the wider global community?

- This study provides the first insight into the clinical effectiveness of the Orve+wrap[®] blanket.

- The Orve+wrap[®] could be used as an alternative intervention to Forced Air Warming in post-operative warming.
- The Orve+wrap[®] has a comparable safety profile to Forced Air Warming.

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Figure 1. Orve+wrap® blanket.

Figure 2. CONSORT diagram of patient recruitment.

Figure 3. Mean Temperature at 10-minute intervals from warming device placement with Standard Error bars.

Figure 4. Mean Temperature (°C) differences at 60 minutes, with error bars for two-sided 95% Confidence Intervals. The non-inferiority margin is represented by a solid line set at 0.3°C.

Table 1 Characteristics and intraoperative data of patients receiving Orve+wrap® or Forced Air Warming. Values are mean or number with SD or proportion in parentheses.

	Orve+wrap® (n = 64)	Forced Air Warming (n = 64)
Age; (years)	62.6 (14.3)	63.3 (14.2)
Sex; Male	38 (59%)	28 (44%)
Body Surface Area; (m ²)	1.97 (0.24)	1.96 (0.21)
ASA Physical Status		
I	14 (22%)	12 (19%)
II	33 (52%)	33 (51%)
III	16 (25%)	19 (30%)
Missing	1 (1%)	
General Anaesthesia (Yes)	35 (55%)	34(53%)

Spinal (Yes)	31 (48%)	32 (50%)
Vasopressors (Yes)	22(34%)	31(48%)
Ambient Temperature on PACU Arrival (°C)	23.7 (1.4)	23.6 (1.3)
First Spot On™ Temperature (°C)	35.4 (0.3)	35.5 (0.3)
First Tympanic Temperature (°C)	35.5 (0.6)	35.5 (0.5)
Surgery Length (mins)	112.9 (68.0)	119.7 (56.7)
Anaesthesia Length (mins)	150.4 (77.7)	163.8 (66.7)
Orthopaedic Surgery	62 (97%)	61 (95%)
Cardiothoracic Surgery	2 (3%)	3 (5%)

Table 2 Mean Temperature at 10-minute intervals from device placement. Values are displayed as Mean (SD) and number

	Orve+wrap®	Forced Air Warming	ANCOVA, p-value
	Mean (SD), n	Mean (SD), n	
First Spot On™ Temperature (°C)	35.4 (0.3), 64	35.5 (0.3), 64	-
Temperature at 10 minutes (°C)	35.9 (0.4), 63	35.8 (0.4), 64	0.18
Temperature at 20 minutes (°C)	35.9 (0.4), 61	35.9 (0.4), 64	0.34
Temperature at 30 minutes (°C)	36.0 (0.4), 58	36.0 (0.5), 62	0.76
Temperature at 40 minutes (°C)	36.0 (0.5), 51	36.1 (0.4), 56	0.57
Temperature at 50 minutes (°C)	36.1 (0.5), 40	36.2 (0.5), 40	0.32
Temperature at 60 minutes (°C)	36.2 (0.6), 30	36.3 (0.5), 32	0.75

Table 3 Post-operative Adverse events in between Orve+wrap® and Forced Air Warming patients (0.5 level of significance)

	Orve+wrap®	Forced Air Warming	p-value
Arrhythmia	1	0	0.32
Hypotension	1	2	0.56
Shivering	6	4	0.51
Surgical Site Infections	0	0	-

Table 4 Length of Stay for patient receiving Orve+wrap® and Forced Air Warming. Values are mean with SD in parentheses.

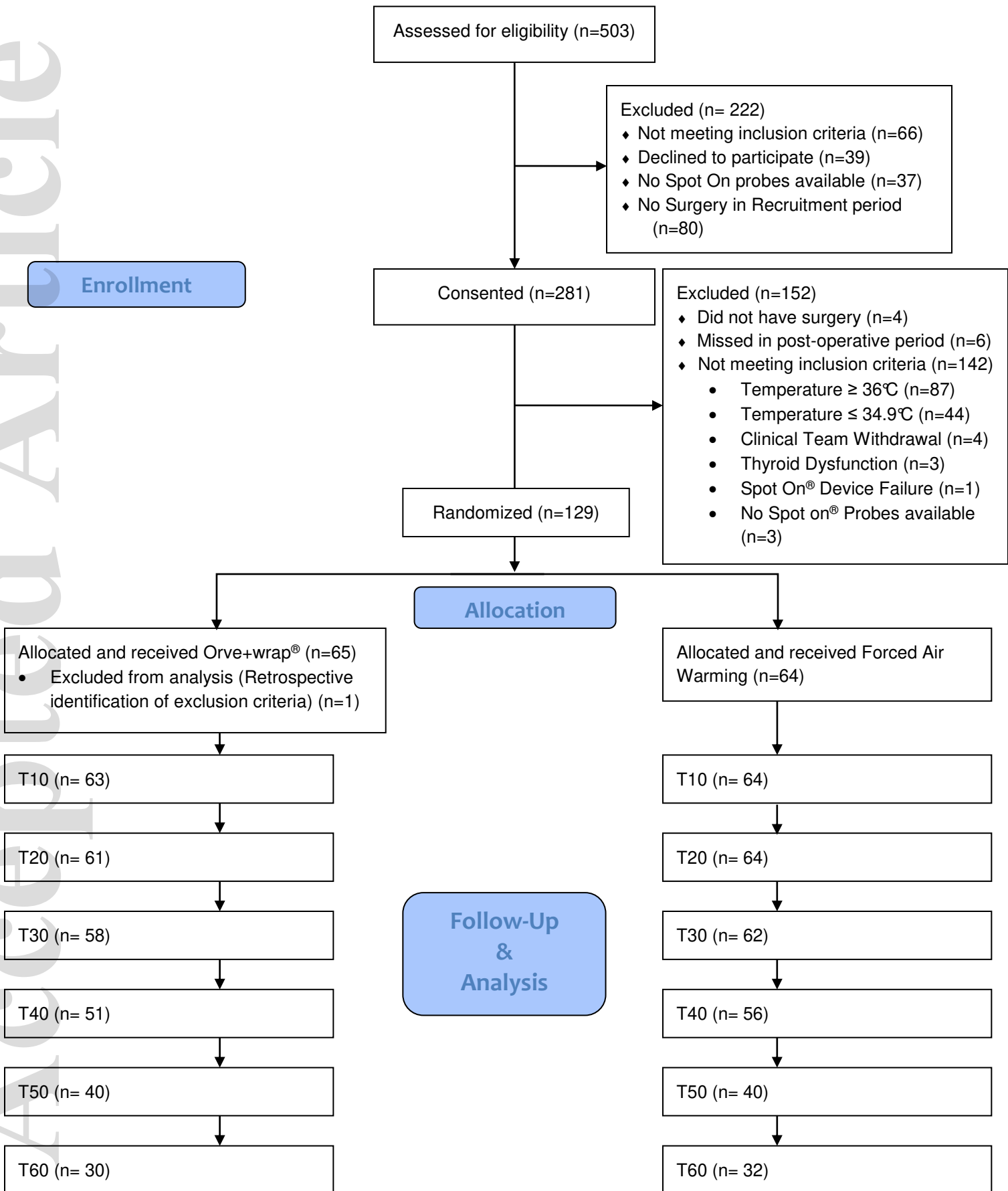
	Orve+wrap®	Forced Air Warming	Mean difference (95% CI)	p-value
PACU LOS (mins)	67.3 (22.6)	80.2 (44.4)	12.5 (0.1, 25.0)	0.05
Post-Surgery Length of Stay (days)	3.1 (2.6)	3.3 (2.4)	0.1 (-0.8, 1.0)	0.64

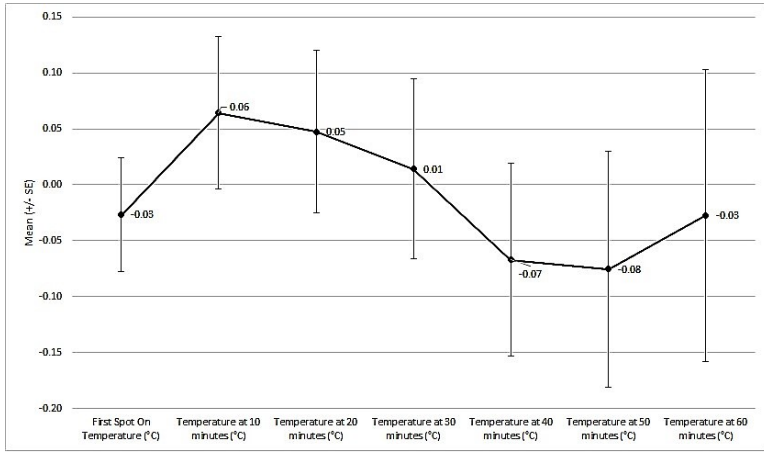
Table 5 Time taken in minutes to place warming devices for patient receiving Orve+wrap® and Forced Air Warming. Values are mean and SD in parentheses.

	Orve+wrap®	Forced Air Warming	Mean difference (95% CI)	p-value
PACU Admission to Spot On™ Reading	5:28 (2:02)	06:26 (3:42)	00:48 (00:17, 01:19)	0.71
PACU Admission to device placement	7:16 (2:36)	10:16 (4:04)	02:46 (02:12, 03:20)	<0.001
Spot On™ Reading to Device Placement	1:48 (1:33)	3:50 (2:18)	05:58 (01:32, 02:23)	<0.001

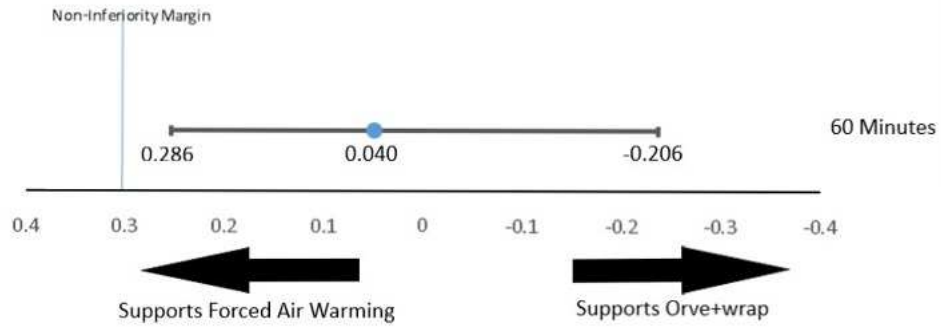


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