INTRODUCTION

Objectives:

1. Identify differences in PTH assay usage in European vs. American physicians.
2. Analyze factors associated with these differences.

Methods:

Anonymous surveys of physicians regarding their use of post-thyroidectomy PTH assays were collected in 2009 from members of the American Academies of Otolaryngology and Endocrine Surgery and compared with 2010 survey data from members of the European, Italian, French, Spanish and British Societies of Endocrine Surgery.

RESULTS

1. European respondents returned 61 surveys that were compared to 356 received from American physicians (11% vs. 3% response rate). 40.1% of the European physicians routinely used the PTH assay vs. 29.8% of the American physicians (chi-square p=0.083). 63% of US respondents were Otolaryngologists, compared with 7% of the Europeans, but usage among US physicians was not significantly correlated with specialty. Fewer American physicians were fellowship trained (26.6% vs. 38.1%) as the reason for non-usage (figure 4).

2. European physicians were most likely to cite lack of availability (60.7%) and patient management (50.8%) as the reason for non-usage (figure 4). American physicians reported higher rates of permanent hypocalcemia among thyroidectomy patients, perhaps accounting for their more frequent use of PTH assays.

CONCLUSIONS

1. PTH assays are significantly more commonly used by younger physicians. There is a trend for European physicians to use these assays more than Americans.
2. Current American and European PTH assay usage remains below 50%, and reasons for low usage should be explored.

REFERENCES

4. Wiseman, James et. al. “An Algorithm Informed by the Parathyroid Hormone Level-Related Hypocalcemia Compartments of Thyroidectomy.” Thyroid; 5:252-525

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Figure 1. Estimates of rate of permanent hypocalcemia for American vs. European surgeons (p = 0.079)

Figure 2. Estimated typical length of hospitalization by PTH assay usage for all surgeons (p = 0.049)

Figure 3. Assay use compared with number of years in independent practice for all surgeons (p = 0.0112)