Clinical study on the use of Titanium Dynamic Compression Plate (Ti-DCP) for repair of femur fractures in dogs

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Abstract
The current study was undertaken to evaluate the clinical efficacy of Titanium Dynamic Compression plate for repair of femur fractures in dogs. This study was conducted on six dogs presented with fractures to the Department of Veterinary Surgery and Radiology at the College of Veterinary Science, Hyderabad. The six cases of fractures were diagnosed by clinical signs, orthopaedic examination and survey radiography. The symptoms observed in the dogs presented for treatment were pain on manipulation, abnormal angulation and lameness immediately after trauma, swelling, non-weight bearing, dangling of the limb and crepitatation at the fracture site. Pre-operative radiographic examination in plain orthogonal views, i.e., cranio-caudal and medio-lateral radiographs revealed diaphyseal fractures in all dogs. Pre-operative radiographs also showed the type of fractures as distal transverse fracture of femur in two dogs, mid shaft diaphyseal transverse femur fracture in two dogs, proximal oblique femur fracture in one dog and mid shaft oblique femur fracture in 2 dogs. All fractures are closed, three in right hindlimb and two in left hindlimb and one dog had bilateral femur fracture. These fractures were stabilized with 2.7 mm Titanium DCP in one dog and 3.5 mm Titanium DCP in five dogs. Good implant stability throughout the treatment period without any complications was achieved all dogs. In all six dogs in the present study showed partial weight bearing on the 1st post-operative day. All six dogs showed normal weight bearing at rest, the weight bearing of the affected limb while walking from 2nd Post-operative day in one dog. 3rd Post-operative day in one dog, 5th Post-operative day in two dogs, 7th Post-operative day in one dogs and 8th Post-operative day in one dog. All six dogs achieved complete weight bearing by 15th post-operative day, i.e. from Grade V to Grade I. The mean age of the all dogs to bear the complete weight on the affected limb were seen on 5.0±2.28 days. The radiographs obtained on 30th day Post-operative day revealed proper apposition, decreased fracture gap, appearance of progressive bridging callus with adequate radio-density in all 6 dogs, and on 60th day revealed continuity of cortical medullary cavity and complete bone formation without any complications with fast healing. Based on present study, it was concluded that Titanium Dynamic compression plating was successful in the treatment of femur fractures in dogs as it is lighter in weight, had superior fatigue and corrosive resistance, improved biocompatibility and lower young’s modulus.

Keywords: Titanium-dynamic compression plate, internal fixation, biocompatibility, femur fracture repair

Introduction
The incidence of musculoskeletal injuries has been increasing constantly and among the small animal surgical cases the incidence of fractures was among the different species and reported it was highest in canines (35.66%) species, and pertaining to bones it was highest in femur bone (36.59%) [1]. Pelvic limb was the most affected limb (85.2%) among which femur bone (29.6%) was the most commonly involved bone followed by tibia-fibula (11.2%) in dogs [2]. The goal of fracture repair is to achieve complete bone healing with optimum function in as little time as possible. Modern fracture stabilization techniques and implants provide outstanding stability enabling a more rapid return to activity. The value of a rapid return to activity includes decreased muscle atrophy, decreased weight gain, maintenance of joint range of motion, minimization of decubital injuries, improved patient attitudes, and higher client satisfaction. Various internal fixation devices have been used to repair the long bone fractures depending upon the stability required. Nonlocking bone plates achieve fixation of the fracture by friction generated by the application of a well-contoured plate to the bone surface with screws. When applied properly, bone plates effectively resist the axial loading, bending, and torsional forces acting on fractured bones [3].

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Among the internal fixation techniques, bone plating was widely used because bone plates have the potential to restore rigid stability to the reconstructed fracture bone and also effectively resist the axial loading, bending and torsional forces acting on the fractures bones. Compared steel and titanium dynamic compression plate for internal fixation, the elasticity closer to that of bone can be obtained with titanium dynamic compression plate than stainless steel plate of same strength [4]. Titanium implants were having lower susceptibility to infection due to its biocompatibility [5]. Titanium and some of its alloys provide many advantages such as excellent biocompatibility, high strength-to-weight ratio, lower elastic modulus, and superior corrosion resistance, required for dental and orthopedic implants6. In comparison to stainless steel, titanium alloy has superior fatigue and corrosion resistance [7].

The dynamic compression plate (DCP) is a special plate developed by the AO group and it is standard plate type for many decades in the veterinary profession, the geometry of the DCP hole allows longitudinal angulation of screws of up to 25 degrees, and transverse angulation of up to 7 degrees. This can produce a challenge if a lag screw is being placed to 25 degrees, and transverse angulation of up to 7 degrees. Proper screw placement is ensured by using drill guides that centre the drill hole in either a loading position, approximately 1mm of compression is achieved for each screw tightened, whereby, in neutral position, approximately 0.1mm of compression is achieved. Adding to its material, titanium gives additional advantage such as excellent biocompatibility, high strength-to-weight ratio, lower elastic modulus, and superior corrosion resistance [7]. Due to paucity of literature on use of Titanium implants in dogs, the present study was undertaken to record the clinical efficacy of Titanium Dynamic Compression plating for repair of femoral fractures in dogs.

Materials and Methods

Anamnesis

The dogs presented for treatment were 3 Mongrel dogs, 2 belongs to Labrador retriever and one Cocker Spaniel. The mean age of the dogs was 6.0±1.26 months with ranging from 4 months to 12 months. The body weights of the dogs ranged from 6-18 kg with a mean of 9.0±1.89 kg. The cause of fractures in this group was car accident in 3 dogs, auto accidents in 2 dogs and slipped on the floor in 1 dog. The fractures occurred in 4 male dogs and 2 female dogs. The mean time of gap between the time of fracture and treatment was 4.16±1.94 days with a range of 2-7 days. The details were shown in Table 1.

Pre-Operative Observations

Pre-operative Clinical Observations

The six dogs presented for treatment femur fractures exhibited symptoms like sudden onset of pain and lameness immediately after a trauma. There were symptoms like swelling, dangling of the limb, non-weight bearing and abnormal angulation of the limb at the fracture site (Fig 1). In all the dogs, crepitation was noticed at the fracture site on palpation. None of the dog had neurological deficit. All the six dogs had closed fractures.

Pre-operative Radiographic Observations

Two plain orthogonal views of medio-lateral and cranio-caudal radiographs of the affected limbs including the proximal and distal joints confirmed fractures5. Out of six dogs, the radiographs revealed distal transverse fracture of femur in two dogs, mid shaft diaphyseal transverse femur fracture in two dogs, proximal oblique femur fracture in one dog and mid shaft oblique femur fracture in 2 dogs. All fractures are closed, three in right hindlimb and two in left hindlimb and one dog had bilateral femur fracture. Pre-operative radiographs of the dogs with femur fractures were presented in fig.2 to 7. The details regarding the fractures encountered in all the dogs are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: History and Signalment of the dogs selected for the study in Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Breed of dog</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age in months</th>
<th>Body weight (KG)</th>
<th>Etiology of fracture</th>
<th>Days since fracture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cocker Spaniel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hit by auto</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hit by car</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Labrador Retriever</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Slipped from the floor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Labrador Retriever</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hit by car</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hit by auto</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hit by car</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male-4, Female-2</td>
<td>6±1.26</td>
<td>9.0±1.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.16±1.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Pre-operative Radiological Observations (Titanium dynamic compression plate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No.</th>
<th>Limb affected</th>
<th>Bone involved</th>
<th>Open or closed</th>
<th>Type / Location of fracture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Right hind limb</td>
<td>Right femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Distal transverse fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Left hind limb</td>
<td>Left femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Mid shaft oblique fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Right hind limb</td>
<td>Right femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Mid shaft oblique fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Right hindlimb</td>
<td>Right femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Mid shaft Transverse fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Both hind limbs</td>
<td>Left femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Left femur– proximal oblique fracture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Left hindlimb</td>
<td>Left femur</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Distal transverse fracture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning of Surgery

Measurements obtained from the pre-operative radiographs of the affected limb like length of the bone and transcortical diameter at different regions proved vital in selecting the length of the Titanium dynamic compression plates and the length of the screws to be used precisely in fracture fixation of femur Fig. 8
Implants
Titanium Dynamic Compression plate were used in six dogs. Selection of appropriate size of Ti DCP was determined by the weight of the dog and pre-operative measurements in medio-lateral view for thickness and length of the plate by measuring the length and width of the femur. In the present study, 2.7mm, 8 holed Titanium dynamic compression plate (Fig.9 and 10) were used in one dog weighing 7 kg, 3.5 mm 6 holed Ti DCP used in 2 dogs weighing 6kg, 3.5mm 7 holed Ti DCP used in one dog weighing 10 kg, 3.5 mm 8 holed (2) Ti DCP in one bilateral femur cases weighing 7kg and 3.5mm 10 holed Ti DCP in one dog weighing 18kg. The results indicated that the use of 6 to 10 holes 2.7 mm and 3.5 mm Titanium Dynamic Compression plate and self tapping 2.7mm and 3.5 mm cortical screws varying from 16 mm to 30 mm in length were used in six dogs were found adequate without any complications. The design of study is given in table.3

**Table 3:** Clinical details of dogs (Titanium Dynamic Compression Plating Technique)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case no.</th>
<th>Breed of dog</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age (m)</th>
<th>Etiology of fracture</th>
<th>Unilateral/bilateral</th>
<th>Type of fracture</th>
<th>Details of implant used</th>
<th>No of screws used 3.5 mm diameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cocker Spaniel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Hit by auto</td>
<td>Unilateral Right femur</td>
<td>Distal transverse fracture</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 3.5 mm thickness 7 holes plate</td>
<td>6 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (16mm-2, 18mm-3, 20mm-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Hit by car</td>
<td>Unilateral left femur</td>
<td>Mid shaft oblique</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 3.5 mm thickness 10 holes plate</td>
<td>8 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (18mm-2, 20mm-2, 26mm-2, 28mm-2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Surgical Procedure

The cranio-lateral border of thigh approach was used for exposure of fractured diaphysis region of femur bone to perform bone plating using Ti-DCP (Fig. 11) [11]. Following the surgical exposure of the fracture site (Fig. 12) as described, the fracture fragments were aligned and reduced to restore the length and correct rotational orientation (Fig. 13). Titanium dynamic compression plate was then placed over the bone and the plate was held in position with bone holding forceps (Fig. 14). It was ensured that, the alignment was correct before securing the plate to the bone with cortical screws. The bone was drilled with 2.0 mm and 2.7 mm drill bit which corresponded with the inner core diameter of the screw using a low speed high torque electric drill. The length of the screws needed for application of Titanium dynamic compression plate in each patient was determined by measuring the transcortical diameter of femur different distances from the fracture site of respective bones from the pre-operative radiographs and was confirmed during the surgical procedure by using a depth gauge. A screw of suitable length was then placed at the drilled hole and tightened using a hexagonal orthopaedic screw driver until the taper end of screw exited the far cortex to secure the Ti-DCP plate to the bone. Bone plating was accomplished by insertion of additional screws in both proximal and distal fracture fragments leaving the fracture line (Fig. 15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mechanism of Injury</th>
<th>Fracture Type</th>
<th>Plate Type</th>
<th>Screws Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Labrador</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>slipped from the floor</td>
<td>Unilateral right femur</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 3.5 mm thickness 6 hole plate</td>
<td>5 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (16mm-1, 18mm-1, 22mm-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Labrador</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Hit by car</td>
<td>Unilateral right femur</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 3.5 mm thickness 6 hole plate</td>
<td>5 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (16mm-3, 18mm-1, 20mm-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Hit by auto</td>
<td>Bilateral femur</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 3.5 mm thickness 8 hole plate</td>
<td>5 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (22mm-2, 20mm-2, 18mm-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mongrel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Hit by auto</td>
<td>Unilateral left femur</td>
<td>Titanium DCP 2.7mm thickness 8 hole plate</td>
<td>7 self-tapping titanium cortical screws (24mm-1, 20mm-4, 18mm-2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig 11:** Skin incision made from trochanter major to lateral condyle of femur

**Fig 12:** Femoral fractured fragments were exposed

**Fig 13:** Fracture fragments were aligned and reduced to restore the length and correct rotational orientation
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Fig 14: Titanium dynamic compression plate was then placed over the bone and the plate was held in position with bone holding forceps.

Fig 15: 3.5mm Titanium Dynamic compression plate used in this group of dogs.

Closure of the incision
In case of femoral approach, the fascia lata was sutured with 2-0 polyglactin 910 in a simple continuous suture pattern (Fig.16). Subcuticular sutures were applied with 2-0 polyglactin 910 (Fig.17). Skin incision was closed with a row of cruciate mattress sutures of 2-0 polyamide (Fig.18).

Fig 16: Tensor fascia lata muscle being closed with simple continuous suture of 2-0 polyglactin 910.

Fig 17: Subcuticular sutures were placed with 2-0 polyglactin 910.

Fig 18: The skin incision was closed in a row of cruciate mattress sutures of 2-0 Polyamide.

Post-Operative Care and Management
The suture line was covered with a thin layer of sterile gauze bandage dipped in 5% povidone iodine solution. Over this, a thick layer of cotton pad was wrapped. It was then covered with gauze bandage and finally, a layer of surgical paper tape was applied. The dressing was replaced on every alternate day until the sutures were removed on the 12th post-operative day. Injection ceftriaxone sodium was administered at the rate of 25 mg/kg body weight as intramuscular injection for 7 days post-operatively. Injection meloxicam was administered once a day at the rate of 0.3 mg/kg body weight by intramuscular injection for 3 days post-operatively. Owners were advised to restrict the movement of the animal for the first 2 weeks of surgery and then to allow leash walking for the next few weeks.

Results
Clinical evaluation was carried out every alternate day to check for the presence of swelling, exudation and weight bearing in all the dogs. The appearance of suture line was also examined every alternate day until the sutures were removed. The post-operative day on which the dog started bearing weight was recorded and graded. After suture removal, the dogs were examined once in a week for the limb stability until fracture healing was considered satisfactory.

Post-Operative Clinical Observations
Dressing the surgical wound with 5% povidone iodine pads was found to be effective in keeping the site clean in all the dogs. Application of Robert-Jones bandage provided
satisfactory immobilization of the limb. The use of injection ceftriaxone sodium effectively prevented post-operative infection. The skin sutures were removed between 10th to 12th post-operative day in all the dogs. None of the dogs developed post-operative swelling and suture dehiscence and the surgical wounds healed well in all the dogs without any complications

**Lameness grading**

In all six dogs in the present study showed partial weight bearing on the 1st post-operative day. All six dogs showed normal weight bearing at rest, the weight bearing of the affected limb while walking from 2nd Post-operative day in one dog, 3rd Post-operative day in one dog, 5th Post-operative day in two dogs, 7th Post-operative day in one dogs and 8th Post-operative day in one dog. All six dogs achieved complete weight bearing. The mean lameness grades observed pre-operatively and on 1st day, 5th day, 7th day, 30th day and 90th day post-operatively were found to be 5.0±±0.0, 3.16±0.98, 1.33±0.51, 1.66±0.81, 1.0±0.0 and 1.0±0.0 respectively. The mean age of this group of dogs to bear the complete weight on the affected limb were seen on 5.0±2.28 days. Different post-operative weight bearing of the affected limb in all six dogs were depicted in Fig. 20. The details of lameness grading [12] were presented in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case. No</th>
<th>Pre-operative</th>
<th>Post-operative weight bearing at the end of</th>
<th>Complete weight bearing seen on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Day 1 Day 15 Day 30 Day 60 Day 90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>II I I I I</td>
<td>2nd day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>III II I I</td>
<td>7th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>III I I I</td>
<td>5th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>III I I I</td>
<td>5th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V II I I I</td>
<td>8th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>III I I I</td>
<td>3rd day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0±0.0 3.16±0.98 1.33±0.51 1.66±0.81 1.0±0.0</td>
<td>5.0±0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade I- Normal weight bearing on all limbs at rest and while walking.
Grade II- Normal weight bearing at rest, favors affected limb while walking.
Grade III- Partial weight bearing at rest and while walking.
Grade IV- Partial weight bearing at rest; does not bear weight on affected limb while walking.
Grade V- Does not bear weight on limb at rest or while walking.

![Case. 1 2nd Post-operative day](image1)

![Case.2 7th Post-operative day](image2)

![Case.3 5th Post-operative day](image3)

![Case.4 5th Post-operative day](image4)
Case.5 8th Post-operative day

Fig 20: Showing first weight bearing of affected hind limb on different post-operative days in all six dogs.

Fig 21: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Mediolateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 1, Immediate post-operative day

Fig 22: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Mediolateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 2, Immediate post-operative day

Fig 23: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Mediolateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 3, Immediate post-operative day

Fig 24: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Mediolateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 4, Immediate post-operative day
FIG 25: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Medio-lateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 5, Immediate post-operative day

FIG 26: Skiagram showing apposition of fracture fragments (Medio-lateral and Cranio-caudal view) Group II - Case 6, Immediate post-operative day

FIG 27: Skiagram showing progressive radiographic fracture healing in case 1

FIG 28: Skiagram showing progressive radiographic fracture healing in case 2

FIG 29: Skiagram showing progressive radiographic fracture healing in case 3
Post-Operative Radiographic Observations
Immediate Post-operative radiographic evaluation confirmed proper placement of Titanium dynamic compression plate with titanium cortical screws, and good apposition of the fractures fragments in all the six dogs (Fig.No.21 to 26). Immobilization was considered satisfactory in all cases in this group. The radiographs obtained on the 15th Post-operative day revealed proper apposition and alignment of fracture fragments in all the six dogs and also presence of callus at the fracture site. The radiographs obtained on 30th day Post-operative day revealed proper apposition, decreased fracture gap, appearance of progressive bridging callus with adequate radio-density in all 6 dogs. By 60th post-operative day the fracture line disappeared and the callus became radio-dense with clear establishment of cortico-medullary canal in all 5 dogs. In one dog the presence a gap in the callus still under process of healing, the callus pointing to the restitution of corticomedullary continuity well appreciated on the radiograph. It is observed that formation of callus, and restitution of the cortico-medullary canal is completed and which is well appreciated on a radiograph by 60th and 90th post-operative days respectively. The progressive radiographic fracture healing was showed in Fig. 27 to 32. In this group it is depicted fast healing on the radiographic evaluation [13] in all dogs without any complications in table 5.

Discussion
Lameness grading based on weight bearing was recorded in all cases pre-operatively, showed grade V lameness. Postoperatively, all 6 dogs progressed to grade I lameness by the end of 30th post-operative day and Post-operative radiographic evaluation confirmed proper placement of the plates and screws, apposition and alignment of the fracture fragments in all the six dogs. Immobilization was considered satisfactory in all the cases. The plate length, size and position were appropriate in all the cases. Screw length, size and position were found to be appropriate in all the cases. Follow-up radiographs taken on 15th, 30th, 60th and 90th post-operative
days revealed primary bone healing with minimal callus formation [15]. By 60th post-operative day the fracture line disappeared and the callus became radio-dense with clear establishment of cortico-medullary canal in all 5 dogs. In one dog the presence a gap in the callus still under process of healing, the callus pointing to the restitution of cortico-medullary continuity well appreciated on the radiograph. Good implant stability throughout the treatment period without any complications was achieved in all dogs and similar results was reported [16,17,18].

Conclusion

Based on present study, it was concluded that Titanium Dynamic Compression Plates (Ti-DCP) was successful for the repair of femur fractures in dogs and offered good recompense and remarkable improvement in the limb function, with good fracture stability till the completion of the bone healing in all six dogs. The application of Ti-DCP plates was found to be effective with additional features such as excellent biocompatibility, high strength-to-weight ratio, lower elastic modulus, and superior corrosion resistance. In this group of dogs with titanium dynamic compression plating technique, all six dogs had no complications, and no owner insisted for removal of the implant.

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References


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