

OVERLAPPING SPHINCTER REPAIR: DOES AGE MATTER?

Hypothesis / aims of study

The predictors of outcomes and quality of life (QOL) following overlapping sphincteroplasty (OSR) for fecal incontinence due to obstetric injury have not been well studied. Many surgeons hesitate to offer OSR to older patients.

Hypothesis: Older patients have a worse outcome after overlapping sphincter repair.

AIM: We aim to evaluate age as a predictor of functional outcome and QOL after OSR.

Study design, materials and methods

Patients with obstetric sphincter injuries undergoing overlapping sphincteroplasty between 1996 and 2000 were evaluated by chart review followed by a prospective evaluation using validated questionnaires. The Fecal Incontinence Quality of Life Scale (FIQL), Fecal Incontinence Severity Index (FISI), the Cleveland Global Quality of Life scale (CGQL) and a patients satisfaction questionnaire were used to assess outcome.. Patients were divided to 2 groups Group A ≤ 60 years old and Group B >60 years. Groups were compared using Fisher's exact test, chi-square test, and Wilcoxon rank test.

Results

197 out of 321 women responded to this study, 146 (74.1%) Group A and 51(25.9%) Group B. Median follow-up was 7.7 years (IQR, 4.7-10.0) with mean age 50.4 ± 14.2 years and BMI of 27.4 ± 5.7 . The mean overall FIQL was 11 ± 3.5 . Median FISI score was 29.8 ± 15.9 . Mean CGQL was 0.7 ± 0.2 . The two groups were comparable for BMI ($p=1.0$), ethnic groups ($p=0.8$), smoking ($p=0.1$) and follow up duration ($p=0.9$). Inter group comparison showed no significant difference in the FIQL scores ($P=0.5$) among the 2 age groups in all subscales: life style ($p=0.8$), coping-behaviour ($p=0.5$), depression and self-perception ($p=0.2$), and embarrassment ($p=0.1$). Also there was no significant difference in FISI scores between both groups ($p=0.2$). CGQL scale ($p=1.0$) and post-operative satisfaction ($p=0.6$) were comparable between both groups.(See Table)

Variable	Group A ≤ 60 years n=146 (47.1%)	Group B >60 years n=51 (25.9%)	P-value
BMI	27.8 ± 6.1	27.4 ± 4.5	1.0
Follow-up Years	7.2 ± 3.3	7.4 ± 3.2	0.9
FIQL Total	10.9 ± 3.4	11.4 ± 3.6	0.5
Life style	3.0 ± 0.8	3.0 ± 1.0	0.8
Coping	2.5 ± 1.0	2.6 ± 1.1	0.5
Depression	2.8 ± 0.8	3.0 ± 0.8	0.2
Embarrassment	2.6 ± 1.0	2.8 ± 1.0	0.1
FISI score	29.9 ± 14.8	27.7 ± 18.4	0.2
CGQL scale	0.7 ± 0.2	0.7 ± 0.2	1.0
Overall satisfaction	2.5 ± 1.3	2.4 ± 1.4	0.6

Interpretation of results

Demographically the two groups were similar. Comparison of the Severity index showed that the two groups had an equivalent outcome and although this index shows that the patients are not very continent the results are not age dependant. The quality of life scale was also similar in both age groups as was the patient satisfaction.

Concluding message

With equivalent long-term continence and quality of life scores following OSR, patients over 60 years of age can be offered this operation with the same outcome expectations as those anticipated for younger patients. We conclude that advanced age is not a predictor of poor outcome following an overlapping sphincter repair

<i>Is this a clinical trial?</i>	No
<i>What were the subjects in the study?</i>	HUMAN
<i>Was this study approved by an ethics committee?</i>	Yes
<i>Specify Name of Ethics Committee</i>	Institutional Review Board Cleveland Clinic Cleveland Ohio
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	No