Original Research Article

The difference in outcome of patients with open inguinal hernia repair by using delayed absorbable sutures instead of non-absorbable sutures for mesh fixation

Ali G. Mohammed Redha*, Adil A. Jaber, Aqeel M. Nasser

Department of Surgery, Al Fayhaa Teaching Hospital, Basra, Iraq

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*Correspondence:
Dr. Ali Ghalib Mohammed Redha,
E-mail: aligalib2003@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Different methods are found for mesh fixation in inguinal hernioplasty both open and laparoscopic. In open technique, sutures have been the method of choice for their reduced costs and surgeons’ habits. Whether absorbable instead of non-absorbable sutures can be used still a matter of debate in view of hernia recurrence and post-operative complications.

Methods: This is a prospective done on 158 male patients with uncomplicated unilateral inguinal hernias. Two groups of 69 patients were evaluated after periods up to 1 year after open hernioplasty by using delayed absorbable sutures in one group (group 1) and non-absorbable sutures in the other group (group 2) for fixation of mesh.

Results: In spite of a noticeable reduction in complication in the group 1 in term of number and percentage when compared with group 2 mainly chronic pain, there is no significant difference (p value>0.05). However, these results are associated with zero recurrence in both groups during a period of one year follow up.

Conclusions: Delayed absorbable sutures are good alternative of non-absorbable sutures in open mesh hernia repair associated with less complications and almost no increase in chance of recurrence.

Keywords: Inguinal hernia, Mesh repair, Suture fixation, Complications, Lichtenstein hernioplasty

INTRODUCTION

Inguinal hernia is a common disease affecting a large number of people with about 20 million surgical operations for hernia repair are performed yearly around the world.1,2

Two different approaches for inguinal hernia surgery are found including open and laparoscopic repair. The most commonly used open procedure is the Lechtesein tension free repair since 1989 and it became the standard open technique at present time by the guidelines.3,4,5

Open mesh repair of inguinal hernia is relatively easier to do, less expensive and can be done under local anesthesia.6 On the other hand, laparoscopic repair needs higher technical requirements, longer learning curve and high economic cost. Some studies mention that laparoscopic repair might be associated with more inguinal hematoma and in the TAPP repair more infection and vesiral organs injury and adhesions.7-10

In both open and laparoscopic approach, the type of mesh used for repair of hernia and the method of its fixation still a matter of debate.11,12

In hernia surgery, the main challenge regarding fixation of mesh is to find a balance between a secure fixation to avoid recurrence and tissue trauma and nerve entrapment as the main cause of chronic pain and discomfort. Both sutures and tissue adhesives were found to be safe equally in terms of recurrence and wound infection, but
The results of study were the analysis of patients age, hernia side and type, number and percentage of complications especially chronic pain, seroma, hematoma, infection, parasthesia and recurrence. Chi square test was used to assess for significance with the \( p \) value<0.05 considered to be of significant finding.

**RESULTS**

The mean age of patients was 37.2 years (range 18-67 years) in group 1 and 40.6 years (range 21-70) years in group 2 as shown in (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Age range (in years)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18-67</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21-70</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In group 1, 64.5% of hernias were right sided and 35.5% were left sided, while in group 2 the right sided hernia was found in 57% of patients and in 43% it was left side hernia as in (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Right (%)</th>
<th>Left (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>51 (64.5)</td>
<td>28 (35.5)</td>
<td>79 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>45 (57)</td>
<td>34 (43)</td>
<td>79 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The type of hernia was direct in 40.5% and indirect in 59.5% of patients in group 1. Direct hernias comprise 36.7% and indirect hernias 63.3% of patients in group 2 as shown in (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Direct (%)</th>
<th>Indirect (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32 (40.5)</td>
<td>47 (59.5)</td>
<td>100 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29 (36.7)</td>
<td>50 (63.3)</td>
<td>Total (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 describes the frequency and percentage of each complication in both groups and degree of significance. Seroma developed in 10 patients (12.7%) in group 1 and in 6 patients (7.6%) in group 2.

Heamatoma occurs in 2 patients (2.5%) in group 2 and no patient in group 1 complain of this complication. Infection was recorded in 5 patients (6.3%) in group 1 and in 7 patients (8.9%) in group 2. Sinus at scar site was developed in one patient (1.3%) in group 1 and in 3 patients (3.8%) in group 2. Parasthesia was complained of by 2 patients (2.5%) in group 1 and by patients (5.1%) in group 2.
Five patients (6.3%) suffered from chronic pain lasting beyond 3 months after surgery in group 1 and 12 patients (15.2%) in group 2 had such pain.

No recurrence of hernia was recorded in both groups of patients after 1 year of follow up.

No significant difference was observed the incidence of complications between the two groups by using chi square where p value considered significant when it is <0.05.

Table 4: The number and percentage of complications in both groups with p value (chi square test).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication</th>
<th>Group 1 (%)</th>
<th>Group 2 (%)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seroma</td>
<td>10 (12.7)</td>
<td>6 (7.6)</td>
<td>0.2930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heamotoma</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2 (2.5)</td>
<td>0.1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>5 (6.3)</td>
<td>7 (8.9)</td>
<td>0.5494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinus</td>
<td>1 (1.3)</td>
<td>3 (3.8)</td>
<td>0.3126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parastheasia</td>
<td>2 (2.5)</td>
<td>4 (5.1)</td>
<td>0.4066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic pain</td>
<td>5 (6.3)</td>
<td>12 (15.2)</td>
<td>0.0723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrence</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

In open inguinal hernioplasty, no consensus about mesh fixation technique has ever been reached. Several types of fixation methods exist such as tacks, staples, self-fixing, fibrin sealants, glues, and sutures. The choice of which method to use strongly depends on the type of surgery and the type of defect but also (and often decisively) on surgeons’ personal beliefs and local habits. In open technique both sutures and tissue adhesives have been proven equally safe in terms of recurrence and wound infection.

Chronic post hernorrhapsy groin pain is defined as a persistent postoperative pain that fails to resolve 3 months after surgery. Chronic pain and discomfort in the groin can occurs after Lichtenstien inguinal hernia repair in up to 25% of patients. The cause of this pain, in addition to other causes, is compression and entrapment of inguinal nerves by sutures used for mesh fixation.

In our study, there were more chronic pain and discomfort when non-absorbable sutures were used in comparison with the use of delayed absorbable sutures. However, it is not significant, but it means that the choice of suture type and knotting (air knot) could improve the patient outcome and quality of life. These findings are similar to other studies done by Kharadi et al and Bharatam et al.

Mesh fixation is a crucial step in hernia repair for good outcomes but as far as recurrence factors there can be other factors play a role so in that view it is difficult to decide which suture material is best. In recent decades, other alternatives like glues, staples, and tackers are also available for fixations with good outcome.

In this study we found no recurrence in both groups and this mean that the use of delayed non-absorbable sutures is a good alternative for the non-absorbable sutures traditionally used for mesh fixation in Lichtenstien repair and their use do not increase chance of recurrence as the short absorbable sutures.

Regarding other postoperative complications, there were no significant differences in seroma, infection, heamatoma, sinus and parastheasia (p value>0.05). However, we noticed a reduction in patients number who complain of infection and then chronic discharging sinus when DN sutures were used. Non absorbable suture material (prolen and nylon) have have indefinite lifetime and hence they harbor infecting microorganisms in the surgical site causing chronic sepsis. For this reason, we use prophylactic antibiotics as routine in aill patients to reduce infection in a site with foreign body implantation (mesh and sutures) inspite of that some studies concluded that no need to use antibiotic as routine and advice it only in high risk patients.

Another aspect in this study is the technique used to minimize the chance of nerve entrapment and tissue damage to which the chronic pain and paraesthesia were attributed. This includes identification of nerves (ilioinguinal, iliohypogastric andgenetofemoral), air knotting and putting the stitches over the mesh surface and not to the mesh edges. In addition to these measures followed in both groups, we think that the use of absorbable sutures has added to the reduced percentage of complication and then improved quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Delayed absorbable sutures are good alternative to non-absorbable sutures for mesh fixation with less complications especially the chronic groin pain and discomfort. They still a good choice in the presence of other materials like glues and tissue sealants when the cost is a concern with a very low rate of recurrence.

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REFERENCES


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