

QUALITY OF LIFE AFTER OASIS: DOES SEVERITY OF FECAL INCONTINENCE MATTER?

Background

Obstetric anal sphincter injury (OASIS) is a common complication of vaginal childbirth occurring in 0,5-5,0%¹⁻⁶ of all vaginal deliveries. Two repair techniques are commonly used: end-to-end and the overlap technique. OASIS can result in significant morbidity. Up to 50% of the women can have complaints of fecal incontinence. The complaints can lead to depression and social isolation.

Methods

This design was a retrospective cohort study. All patients who had an OASIS repair in our hospital between January 2005 and June 2008 were asked to participate. Patients were excluded when they had sustained more than one OASIS or with diseases that may cause similar problems (e.g. M. Crohn's). All patients were sent a questionnaire, which contained the Dutch validated Vaizey-questionnaire⁷ and a Dutch translation of the FIQL-questionnaire⁸. Data analysis was done using SPSS 17. Chi-square tests were applied when the data were nominal, for scale or ordinal data independent sample t-tests or one-way ANOVA tests were applied.

Results

Data were available for 162 patients, 5 patients were excluded. The mean age was 33.6 years (SD \pm 4.5). Of the 157 patients, 78 returned the questionnaires (49.6%). The mean duration between the repair and the questionnaires was 2.8 years (SD \pm 1 yr). Between responders and non-responders were two significant differences; firstly the mean maternal age was 1,5 years higher in the responding group ($p=0.044$). Secondly, significantly more women who had the repair done by an obstetrician sent back the questionnaires.

The mean Vaizey score was 3.56 (SD \pm 4) and ranged 0 to 20. Six percent had a high score (>12) on incontinence severity. Women with a low severity of fecal incontinence experienced no influence on their quality of life. (Figure 1) They had a mean FIQL score of 4 for Lifestyle, 3.9 for Coping, 3.8 for Depression and 3.8 for Embarrassment. All domains were negatively affected by the severity of the incontinence (Figure 2). The strongest negative effect was seen on the domain Coping.

Conclusion

Women, who had sustained OASIS, had in 6% severe fecal incontinence. The results of the questionnaires showed a clear relation between the Vaizey score and the FIQL score: patients with a higher Vaizey score showed a lower FIQL score.

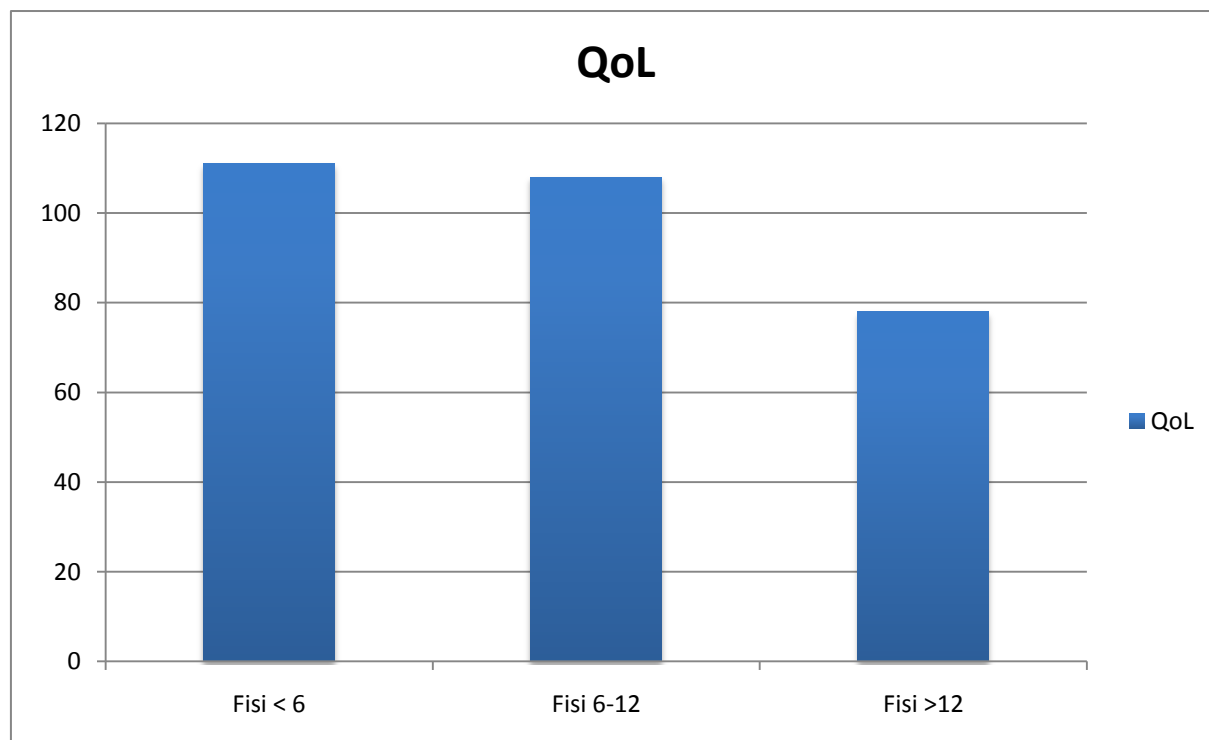


Figure 1

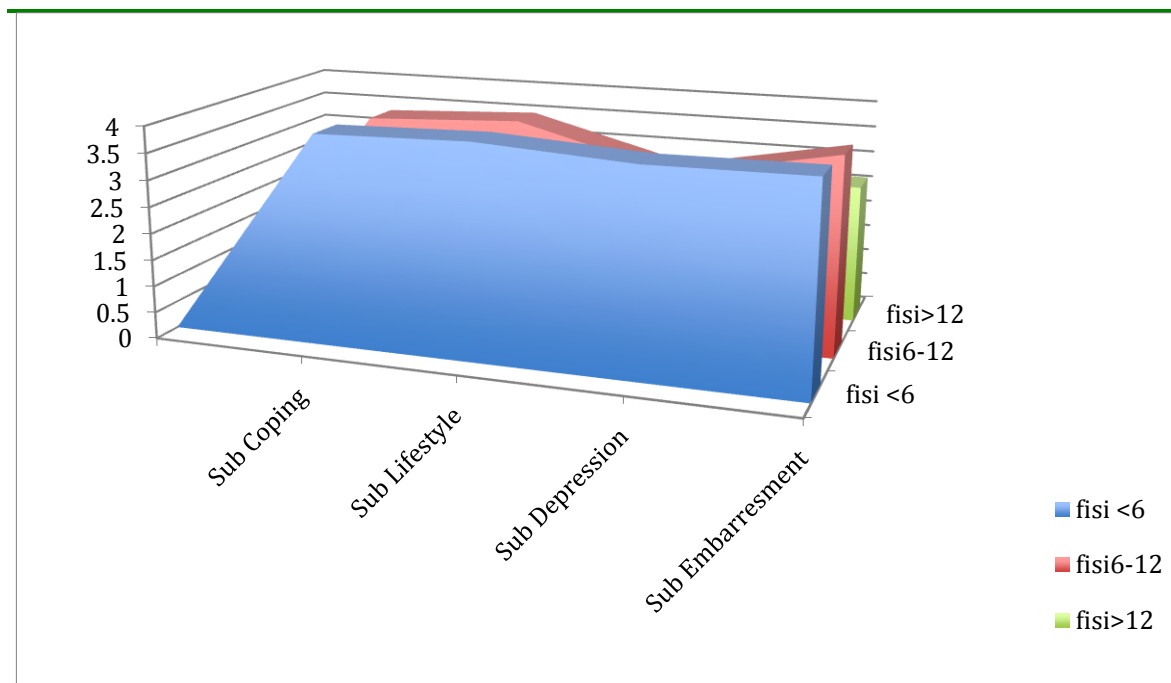


Figure 2

References

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3. Rockwood TH, Church JM, Fleshman JW, Kane RL, Mavrantonis C, Thorson AG, Wexner SD, Bliss D, Lowry AC. Faecal Incontinence Quality of Life Scale: quality of life instrument for patients with faecal incontinence. *Dis Colon Rectum* 2000 jan; 43(1): 9-16.

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Is this a clinical trial?	Yes
Is this study registered in a public clinical trials registry?	No
Is this a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)?	No
What were the subjects in the study?	HUMAN
Was this study approved by an ethics committee?	Yes
Specify Name of Ethics Committee	Medical Ethics Committee of St Antonius Hospital
Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?	Yes
Was informed consent obtained from the patients?	Yes