

PROSPECTIVE INTERVENTIONAL STUDY TO EVALUATE POSTPARTUM ANAL INCONTINENCE AFTER OVERLAPPING REPAIR OF OBSTETRIC ANAL SPHINCTER INJURIES AMONG FILIPINO PRIMIPARAS

Hypothesis / aims of study

Obstetric Anal Sphincter Injuries (OASIS) in the form of third and fourth degree perineal lacerations are established causes of anal incontinence after pregnancy [1]. It affects the way of life of those who have the symptoms. The prevalence rate of postpartum anal incontinence worldwide is reported to be between 15-61%. As such, it is a major concern among obstetricians and gynecologists worldwide. In the Philippines, the burden is much greater as aside from the other known risk factors for OASIS, Indo-Asians were found to be at high risk in sustaining severe perineal trauma [2]. As such, the objective of this study is to determine the incidence of anal incontinence among Filipino primiparas after Overlapping Technique repair of obstetric anal sphincter injury.

Study design, materials and methods

This is a prospective interventional study, which recruited 40 Filipino primiparas who delivered vaginally and unassisted by either forceps or vaccum, sustaining anal sphincter tears (grade 3B, 3C, and 4), without any comorbidities, who underwent overlapping technique repair of OASIS. The patients were followed-up at first and sixth week postpartum to assess the presence or absence of anal incontinence with the help of the St. Mark's Incontinence Scoring.

Results

There were no study drop outs. All patients were seen and assessed at the first and sixth week postpartum. One out of the 40 subjects developed anal incontinence beginning at the second week postpartum, which spontaneously resolved after three weeks. The incidence rate of postpartum anal incontinence of Filipino primiparas who underwent Overlapping Repair of OASIS was 2.5%.

Interpretation of results

Anal incontinence has a negative effect on quality of life. As there is social stigma attached to such symptoms, women who have anal incontinence rarely report the disease. Active case finding allows the physician to easily identify and subsequently manage postpartum women with anal incontinence. If done properly, repairing OASIS will lessen the incidence of postpartum anal incontinence.

Concluding message

The incidence rate generated in this study is lower than published incidence rate of postpartum anal incontinence. The use of Overlapping Technique in the repair of OASIS in Asian women can serve as a template in the management of third and fourth degree perineal tears. Further studies are recommended to compare the effects on anal incontinence in Filipino patients who underwent end-to-end repair versus overlapping repair, by symptoms-based assessment as well as by imaging techniques such as transperineal sonography or endopelvic ultrasound.

References

1. Sultan, Abdul and Thakar, Raneer. "Chapter 4: Third and Fourth Degree Tear; Perineal and Anal Sphincter Trauma Diagnosis and Clinical Management". Springer. 2007, XII, 195p.
2. Dahlen, H and Homer, C. "Perineal trauma and postpartum perineal morbidity in Asian and non-Asian primiparous women giving birth in Australia." Journal of Obstetric and Gynecological Neonatal Nursing, July-August 2008, 37(4);455-463.

Disclosures

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