

TENSION FREE VAGINAL MESH (TVM) - A PATIENT'S VIEW

Hypothesis / aims of study

Innumerable techniques have been described for repair of female pelvic organ prolapse (POP). Recently, the use of surgical mesh in these procedures has become increasingly popular. However patient views about results from these new techniques are yet to be thoroughly investigated. The objective of this study was to assess patient satisfaction three months after tension free vaginal mesh (tvm) repair of POP.

Study design, materials and methods

Postal questionnaire survey done three months after tvm procedure was employed. Thirty six women with a mean age of 58.9 who underwent tvm repair for symptomatic recurrent or grade three/four POP (between October 2005 and November 2007 at a large district general hospital) were sent the questionnaire which rated pre-operative to postoperative symptom improvement into 4 categories a: not at all, b: somewhat, c: moderately and d: quite a bit

The primary outcome measure was women's satisfaction with results of treatment.

Results

Thirty-two patients completed questionnaires, achieving 88.88% response (32/36). Anterior mesh repair (atvm) 4/32 (12.5%), posterior mesh repair (ptvm) 11/32 (34.37%), total vaginal mesh repair (ttvm) 7/32 (21.87%), atvm repair with vaginal hysterectomy 2/32 (6.25%), ptvm repair with vaginal hysterectomy 2/32 (6.25%) and ttvm repair with vaginal hysterectomy 6/32 (18.75%) were performed as indicated. Significant post operative improvement (quite a bit) was reported by 14 out of 19 (73.68%) participants with preoperative restriction of household activities, 15 out of 21 (71.42%) respondents with limitation of outdoor pursuits, 11/15 (73.33%) with abdominal/pelvic discomfort, 23/27 (85.18%) with a troublesome vaginal mass, 11/20 (55%) with bowel dysfunction and 14/28 (50%) with problems at micturition. Seven out of eighteen (38.8%) respondents with difficulty in intercourse reported significant improvement postoperatively while only 3 /18 (16.6%) felt that the operation did not make any difference at all. The questionnaire also provided a box for free text entries which was utilised by 25 respondents. 22 of the responses were positive. Of the three negative entries two related to urinary symptoms and one to problems with wound healing. Over all 24 out of 27 (88.88%) respondents who had definite preoperative goals felt that the procedure had been successful in meeting their expectations from the surgery.

Interpretation of results

This study gives a reliable account of patient views on this relatively new procedure. Tvm repair for women referred with symptomatic recurrent and grade 3/4 POP seems to achieve relatively high levels of patient satisfaction at 3 month follow up.

Concluding message

These results appear promising. Different measures of success have been used in a variety of studies evaluating use tension free vaginal meshes in pelvic organ prolapse. Long term functional results must be assessed in combination with safety data and studies on patient satisfaction before routine use of tvm repair for POP is recommended.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	None
<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>	No
<i>This study did not require ethics committee approval because</i>	Lanarkshire Research Ethics Committee was approached for approval but was of the view that ethical approval was not needed as it was a Postal questionnaire survey
<i>Was the Declaration of Helsinki followed?</i>	Yes
<i>Was informed consent obtained from the patients?</i>	Yes