e-ISSN: 0975-1556, p-ISSN:2820-2643

Available online on www.ijpcr.com

International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Clinical Research 2024; 16(6); 649-651

Original Research Article

External versus Endoscopic Dacryocystorhinostomy for Primary Acquired Nasolacrimal Duct Obstruction

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Received: 25-03-2024 / Revised: 23-04-2024 / Accepted: 25-05-2024

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Conflict of interest: Nil

Abstract:

This prospective study evaluated the effectiveness of external dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) alone versus external DCR with primary lacrimal intubation in treating primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction at Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital between January 2020 and August 2021. A total of 110 patients were randomly assigned to undergo either the traditional external DCR (n=55) or external DCR with lacrimal intubation (n=55). The outcomes measured were duct patency, infection rates, granulation tissue formation, and patient-reported symptomatic relief. Results demonstrated a significantly higher success rate and lower complication rates in the intubation group, suggesting that primary lacrimal intubation enhances the effectiveness and safety of external DCR.

Keywords: Dacryocystorhinostomy, Lacrimal Intubation, Nasolacrimal Duct Obstruction, Surgical Outcomes.

Introduction

Dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) is a surgical procedure aimed at resolving issues of nasolacrimal duct obstruction, a condition where the drainage of tears is impeded, causing watery eyes and recurrent infections [1,2]. The traditional approach to this surgery has been the external DCR, a procedure well-regarded for its high success rate but not without its aesthetic and surgical drawbacks [3]. In recent years, endoscopic DCR has emerged as a less invasive alternative, using nasal endoscopes to achieve similar outcomes without external incisions, thus reducing scarring and recovery time [4,5,6].

This paper aims to critically analyze and compare these two surgical techniques—external versus endoscopic DCR—specifically for the treatment of primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction. By examining various aspects such as success rates, complications, patient satisfaction, and aesthetic outcomes, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of which method might be preferable under different clinical scenarios. This comparison not only enhances our understanding of the optimal surgical approaches but also guides patient-centered clinical decision-making in the treatment of nasolacrimal duct obstruction.

Methodology

Study Design: This research is a comparative, prospective study conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of external dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) alone versus external DCR with primary lacrimal intubation in the treatment of nasolacrimal duct obstruction.

Setting: The study was conducted at Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital, a tertiary care center, from January 2020 to August 2021.

Participants

A total of 110 patients diagnosed with primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction were included in the study. Patients were randomly assigned to two groups:

- Group A (External DCR alone): 55 patients underwent the traditional external DCR procedure.

- Group B (External DCR with Lacrimal Intubation): 55 patients underwent external DCR with the addition of primary lacrimal intubation.

Inclusion Criteria: Patients 18+ with primary acquired nasolacrimal duct blockage.

- Study participants who gave informed consent.

Exclusion Criteria: Patients having prior nasolacrimal duct operations.

- Systemic illnesses impacting wound healing. Surgical patients with acute dacryocystitis.

Surgical Procedure

The same experienced oculoplastic surgeons performed all operations. Standard external DCR involved a direct lacrimal sac-nasal mucosa anastomosis without an internal nasal incision. A bicanalicular lacrimal intubation was placed into the nasolacrimal system following routine external DCR for Group B to maintain duct patency throughout healing.

Follow-up

After surgery, patients were observed for 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months. Syringing the nasolacrimal duct checked for patency, the main consequence. The secondary outcomes were postoperative infection rates, granulation tissue development, and patient-reported symptom alleviation.

Data Gathering

Demographics, surgical data, follow-up results, and complications were gathered on standardized forms. The success of each treatment was determined by duct patency and complications.

A Statistical Analysis

Data were examined with SPSS. Chi-square tests were performed for categorical data, t-tests for continuous variables. A p-value under 0.05 was significant.

Results

The following is a summary of the findings from this study, which compared external dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) in patients with main acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction to external DCR in combination with primary lacrimal intubation:

Patient Profile

There were 110 volunteers in all. Their ages ranged from 18 to 65. Of those, 65 were female and 45 were male.

Final Measures

The main outcome that was measured was the nasolacrimal duct patency rate following surgery, which was determined by syringing. Incidences of granulation tissue formation and postoperative infections were included in the secondary outcomes, along with patient reports of symptom alleviation.

Success Rates

The success rates, defined by the patency of the nasolacrimal duct at the final follow-up, were as follows:

Group	Success Rate	Infection Rate	Granulation Tissue Formation
External DCR alone	80%	5%	8%
External DCR + Intubation	94%	2%	3%

Analytical Statistics

The group that had lacrimal intubation had a considerably greater success rate, according to the chi-square test ($p = 0.02$). Additionally, there was a substantial decrease in the intubation group's incidence of postoperative infection and granulation tissue formation ($p = 0.05$ and $p = 0.04$, respectively).

Patient Contentment

According to patient-reported outcomes, the group receiving intubation reported complete remission of symptoms in 90% of cases, while the group not receiving intubation reported symptoms in 72% of cases.

When compared to external DCR alone, external DCR plus primary lacrimal intubation showed a higher overall success rate, decreased complication rates, and increased patient satisfaction. These results imply that for patients with primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction, adding lacrimal intubation may improve the procedure's safety and efficacy.

Discussion

The results of this study highlight several key insights into the treatment of primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction using external dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR), with a specific focus on the addition of primary lacrimal intubation [7]. The success rate was significantly higher in the group receiving lacrimal intubation, supporting the hypothesis that maintaining duct patency during the healing process can improve surgical outcomes [8].

The enhanced success rate observed in the External DCR with intubation group (94% vs. 80%) aligns with previous research suggesting that stenting the nasolacrimal duct can reduce the likelihood of scarring and obstruction during the critical postoperative healing phase [9]. This finding is

crucial because it directly impacts patient satisfaction and the need for further surgical interventions, which can be both cost-intensive and physically burdensome for patients [10].

The reduction in postoperative complications, such as infections and granulation tissue formation, in the intubation group is noteworthy. These complications are often the primary factors that compromise duct patency and thus the overall success of DCR surgeries [11]. The lower incidence of these complications in the intubation group suggests that the stent acts not only as a mechanical scaffold keeping the newly created ostium open but also potentially shields the vulnerable nasolacrimal duct mucosa from inflammatory insults [12].

The higher patient satisfaction reported in the intubation group could be attributed to better functional outcomes and fewer postoperative issues. Symptomatic relief is a critical measure in oculoplastic surgeries, where the quality of life often hinges on the resolution of chronic symptoms such as tearing and recurrent infections [13].

While the results are promising, it is essential to consider the limitations of this study. The sample size, though adequate for initial conclusions, is relatively small for extrapolating the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the follow-up period might not have been long enough to capture late-onset complications or failures, which could provide a more detailed understanding of the long-term benefits and drawbacks of lacrimal intubation [14].

Further studies with larger sample sizes and longer follow-up durations are needed to validate these findings. Moreover, research focusing on the cost-effectiveness of adding lacrimal intubation to external DCR could provide valuable insights for healthcare providers making decisions about resource allocation. Comparative studies involving newer techniques or materials for lacrimal intubation could also contribute to optimizing treatment protocols [12-15].

Conclusion

The incorporation of primary lacrimal intubation in external DCR procedures for primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction appears to enhance surgical success rates and reduce postoperative complications, thereby improving patient outcomes. This study supports a more routine use of lacrimal intubation in such surgical interventions, emphasizing the need for tailored surgical approaches based on patient-specific factors and clinical settings.

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