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Comment on Hip Labral Reconstruction

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none

The article, Acetabular Labral Reconstruction with Iliotibial Band Autograft, discusses the management of hip pathology by a technique described by the principal author without including information that proves the worth of this technique, nor fully satisfying the stated purpose of the study to determine the long-term survivorship of this technique.

Initially it is asserted that patients treated had complained about hip pain, It is also documented that tearing of the hip labrum was found in each patient. The introductory paragraph stated that “suction seal created by the labrum is essential...” However, undiscussed is that hip labral tears can be present in hips of asymptomatic volunteers (69% in the article referenced) (1).

If it is assumed that hip labral tears were necessarily the sole explanation for the hip pain complaints of the treated patients, the authors provide no metric to judge the outcome of the proposed treatment by leaving unsaid the natural history of the untreated condition. That omission does not permit a conclusion that the surgical repair is superior to no treatment at all.

Furthermore, most of the treated patients received adjunctive procedures (cam and pincer decompressions, “microfracture” of the articular surfaces, and debridement of the ligamentum teres). If the patients were improved, it is not assured that the autograft procedure had been the effective component of care.

As well, the author noted in conclusion that “labral healing was not determined” with any degree of certainty so there is no assurance that the desired restoration of “suction seal” had been restored.

The data presented in this article is insufficient to commend the described technique as a worthy treatment.

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References

1. Prevalence of Abnormal Hip Findings in Asymptomatic Participants. A Prospective, blinded study. Register B, Pennock AT, et al. The American Journal of Sports Medicine, Vol. 40, No. 12, 2720-2725, 2012

Conflict of Interest: None Declared