URINARY TRACT OBSTRUCTION

New PROM questionnaire for urethral stricture surgery

Patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) are useful in determining whether a clinical intervention has been successful and provide valuable insight into the patient's perspective. A new robust PROM to specifically quantify voiding symptoms and quality of life (QOL) after urethral stricture surgery has been developed and tested in a pilot study. "A urethral stricture PROM didn't exist and we felt that patient-centred outcomes are destined to become a currency of health care," notes lead author Matthew Jackson, Freeman Hospital, UK.

Preoperative and postoperative urethral stricture surgery PROMs were devised. Patients rated voiding and postmicturition lower urinary tract symptoms and health-related QOL measures (general and specific to the condition itself), as well as overall satisfaction in the postoperative PROM. "Rather than devise the PROM from scratch, we mapped constructs from instruments widely used for other conditions of the male lower urinary tract to domains that patients with urethral strictures found important," explains Jackson.

85 men who underwent penile urethroplasty were enrolled in the study, of whom 49 completed the health questionnaires both before and after their operation (median 146 days after surgery) and 31 completed the preoperative PROM twice (median interval 22 days) for test–retest analysis.

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Researchers found that the new PROM was valid and reliable and enabled the clinicians to gauge notable changes in several factors—such as voiding symptoms, maximum flow rate, and QOL measures—in patients after their surgery.

Jackson notes that the ability to develop a valid construct from limited resources and using existing measures and instruments was a major finding of their study. "Other questionnaire validation studies tend to begin with a lengthy qualitative process to generate the question items," he says. "We eliminated this step at no cost to the quality of the final instrument by using what was already out there."

The PROM now needs to be tested in a wider group of patients and clinics to establish whether it is useful across a broad group of individuals and health-care systems. The study authors also hope to create an entire suite of PROMs for reconstructive urology, which could link in with computer adaptive testing and individualized outcome measures.

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Original article Jackson, M. J. *et al.* Defining a patient-reported outcome measure for urethral stricture surgery. *Eur. Urol.* doi:10.1016/j.eururo.2011.03.003