QUALITY OF LIFE VALIDATED PROM FOR URETHRAL STRICTURE

Researchers who developed a patient-reported outcome measure (PROM) for men treated for urethral stricture have shown that the quality of life (QOL) and symptom control benefits of urethroplasty are sustained 2 years after the operation.

“We shortlisted constructs from existing health questionnaires and asked men with urethral stricture to complete them before and after urethroplasty for anterior stricture to determine their psychometric properties,” explains lead researcher Matthew Jackson. The team then selected the best questions for the Urethral Stricture Surgery (USS) PROM in the preliminary validation study. The final instrument includes health-related QOL and LUTS domains, and a treatment satisfaction question.

A total of 46 men took part in the new study—they completed the USS PROM before surgery and 2 years later. A subset of 33 men also completed the questionnaire 6 months after the operation. “We wanted to find out whether the health benefits apparent 6 months after urethral reconstruction were maintained in the medium term,” explains Jackson.

Overall, the LUTS score was reduced from a median of 12 at baseline to 1 at 6 months, but increased to 4 by 2 years. However, individual patients showed an average decrease of >6 scale points at 2 years. Furthermore, 72% of men felt that their urinary symptoms were less bothersome at 2 years than at baseline and 87% were satisfied with the operation.

“This study indicates the USS PROM is fit for purpose—we feel it should be used by urethral surgeons routinely,” Jackson states. Indeed, the PROM might be gaining acceptance; a multicentre UK-based randomized superiority trial of open urethroplasty versus endoscopic urethrotomy (OPEN) is using the USS PROM as its primary outcome measure.

In future, “international consensus on an outcome-reporting standard for interventions for urethral stricture would greatly facilitate much-needed meta-analyses and pooled analyses,” explains Jackson. The team are also developing qualitative research methods to further explore the outcomes, cost-effectiveness and condition-specific parameters associated with urethral diseases.

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Original article Jackson, M. J. *et al.* A prospective patient-centred evaluation of urethroplasty for anterior urethral stricture using a validated patient-reported outcome measure. *Eur. Urol.* doi:10.1016/j.eururo.2013.04.037