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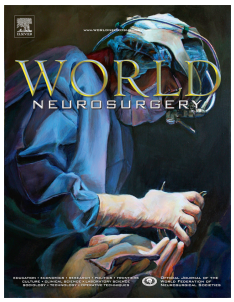

Comparative study of two skin incisions for microscopic lumbar discectomy

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PII: S1878-8750(16)31066-X

DOI: 10.1016/j.wneu.2016.10.077

Reference: WNEU 4745

To appear in: *World Neurosurgery*

Received Date: 26 July 2016

Revised Date: 12 October 2016

Accepted Date: 14 October 2016

Please cite this article as: Hamouda WO, Aladdin M, AL-Muammar SA, Gari DMK, Comparative study of two skin incisions for microscopic lumbar discectomy, *World Neurosurgery* (2016), doi: 10.1016/j.wneu.2016.10.077.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Microscopic lumbar discectomy is a common, minimally invasive surgery. A transverse skin incision has sound theoretical cosmetic advantages in comparison to the classic vertical incision. ***Objectives:*** the study aimed to compare transverse and vertical skin incisions for microscopic discectomy regarding cosmetic outcome, postoperative pain and the provided surgical cutaneous inlet. ***Materials & Methods:*** Eighty-six patients were randomly enrolled prospectively in the study, divided among a vertical incision group (V group) and a transverse incision group (T group). The maximum surgical cutaneous inlet provided was measured in two diameters. Post-operative pain was recorded using a numeric patient rating scale from 0 to 10 with 0 indicating no pain at days 1, 3 and 7 postoperatively. Cosmetic appearance of the wound was evaluated by a plastic surgeon and by the patients to fall within five categories (excellent, very good, good, fair and poor). ***Results:*** In comparison to vertical incisions, transverse incisions provide similar surgical cutaneous inlets, cause higher pain scores on days 1 and 3 postoperative days but similar score on the 7^{th} day, and ensure a significantly better wound cosmesis. ***Conclusion:*** Transverse skin incision for microscopic lumbar discectomy is an applicable alternative to the classic midline or paramedian vertical incisions with better aesthetic results.

KEYWORDS

Transverse - Skin incision - Lumbar – Microdiscectomy

INTRODUCTION

Sciatica caused by lumbar intervertebral disc herniation is the most frequent indication for spinal surgery [4]. and lumbar discectomy has become the most common neurosurgical procedure in the US, with nearly 300,000 procedures performed each year [10]. Since the first report of lumbar disc surgery in 1934 by Mixter and Barr [15], progressively less invasive

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