

Delineating the burden of chronic post-operative pain in patients undergoing open repair of complex ventral hernias

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: After open complex ventral hernia repair (cVHR), chronic pain has a significant impact on quality of life and processes of care.

METHODS: Records of 177 patients undergoing cVHR were reviewed in order to characterize the burden of managing postoperative pain in the first post-operative year following open cVHR.

RESULTS: In this cohort, 91 patients initiated at least one unsolicited complaint of pain, though phone call (37), unscheduled clinic visit (45) or evaluation in the emergency room (9); among these an actionable diagnosis was found in 38 (41.8%). Among 41 patients who initiated additional unsolicited complaints of pain, an actionable diagnosis was found in only 3 patients. Risk factors for such complaints included pre-operative pain and the use of synthetic mesh.

CONCLUSIONS: Even in the absence of an actionable diagnosis, significant resources are utilized in evaluation and management of unsolicited complaints of pain in the first year after cVHR.

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