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Review

Patient reported outcome measures in microtia surgery[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Microtia;
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Summary *Background:* Autologous ear reconstruction for microtia is a complex, multi-stage procedure. The success of the procedure is dependant on how the patient perceives the outcomes of surgery and their overall experience. Patient reported measures are therefore crucial to developing the technique and improving the patient journey.

Aim: The aim of this study was to use two reproducible patient reported outcome tools as an objective measure of microtia reconstructive surgery.

Methods: A retrospective cohort study was performed at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), London and the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC), Edinburgh. Two questionnaires were posted to patients with congenital microtia who underwent an autologous ear reconstructive procedure. The first questionnaire – designed by the authors at Great Ormond Street Hospital – measured the patient's perspectives of: ear appearance, the individual aesthetic units and the donor site. The second questionnaire – created by the authors at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children – collected demographic information; and asked general questions regarding ear surgery including psychosocial considerations and satisfaction scores of individual aesthetic units.

Results: The majority of patients were very satisfied with their reconstructed ear (83% at GOSH and 85% at RHSC). High patient satisfaction scores were reported for the lobe of ear and size of the ear. Low satisfaction scores were reported for the antitragus and projection of ear.

Conclusion: The measures used in this study provide an objective assessment of patient reported experience and outcome that in the future can be used as a means of targeted quality improvement and to benchmark care nationally.

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Introduction

Autologous ear reconstruction for congenital microtia is a complex multi-stage reconstructive procedure performed in children and adults. The procedure can be technically challenging and requires comprehension of the three-dimensional morphology of the ear. However, success of ear reconstruction largely depends on patient perceptions regarding the results of the surgery and their overall experience of the procedure. Although a surgeon's view of the success of the procedure is important, patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) are essential to developing surgical techniques and improving the patient journey.

Correcting facial deformities using surgical methods is important for several reasons. The desire for surgery to correct facial deformities is partly affected by society and culture, which places strong emphasis on physical appearance.^{1,2} People with facial abnormalities can feel unattractive and may have low self-esteem. This may in turn lead them to behave in a more introverted and less friendly manner, which can further isolate them from others.³ Children with ear disfigurements can become the object

of ridicule causing severe distress.⁴ Studies have shown that patients with microtia are at higher risk of depression and social difficulties.⁵

We have previously reported on the outcomes of auricular reconstruction with autologous cartilage; we showed an improvement in quality of life using health related quality of life assessment scores, as measured using the Glasgow inventory score. By using this method of assessment, we also found that higher scores for individual aesthetic units led to a greater health-related quality-of-life gain.⁶

In this study we describe the results of two simple and reproducible patient-reported experience and outcome tools as an objective measure of the results of microtia reconstruction.

Methods

Study design

For this retrospective cohort study, we used two PROMs questionnaires designed by the authors. The study was

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