Title: "Understanding the hopes and fears of patients undergoing surgery for pelvic organ prolapse"

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Objective: The primary objective was to explore the hopes and fears of patients undergoing surgery for pelvic organ prolapse and to assess their quality of life using the validated questionnaires POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7. The secondary objectives were to measure the achievement of hopes and resolution of fears in a subset of patients at 6 weeks and 3 months post operatively and secondly, to compare these results with the validated questionnaires. Thirdly, to look at the merits of the study instrument as compared to the validated questionnaire.

Methods:

All women enrolled in the study were administered the study instrument, where in, through a semi structured interview they were asked to enlist their bother due to the prolapse in various aspects of their life as in mass per say, urinary, fecal, activity related, social and sexual life. They were also asked to quantify this bother on a VAS scale of 0-100 and prioritize their bother from 1 -5, the 1st being the most bothersome of all. They were also asked to enlist their hopes and fears pertaining to the surgery. The validated QOL questionnaires POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 were administered.

For analytical purposes the responses obtained for the study instrument and ‘the hopes and fears’ question were categorized into various domains from 1-6 as related to symptom resolution, daily activity, emotions, social life, sexual life and others.

At 6 weeks and 3 months the subset of patients who were followed up were questioned regarding the achievement and resolution of their hopes and fears, respectively and to quantify them on a VAS scale of 0-100. They were also asked to score their current affect on the various aspects of their life that were affected pre operatively due to the prolapse, on a VAS scale of 0-100 to look for improvement. The validated questionnaires POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 were also administered post operatively.

Statistical analysis:
Descriptive were reported using mean ± SD for continuous variables and N(%) for categorical variables. Fischer’s exact test was used to calculate the association between the achievement and resolution of hopes and fears, respectively and the post operative POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 scores. Pearson’s Rho correlation was used to calculate the correlation between the scores obtained from the study instrument and the validated questionnaires (POPDI 20, PFIQ 7 scale and their subscales). Regression analysis and simple linear equation was done to quantify the correlation between the above scores.

**Results:**

98 patients were recruited for the study. The median number of responses for hopes (range 1-4) and fears (range 0-4) were 2 and 1 respectively. Most of the responses for hopes, 67.14 %, belonged to symptom resolution, the second most common being activity related, 19.32 % of responses. Fears were mostly of others category (81%) as they were mostly related to the surgery per say (unawareness of the procedure, complications and recurrence, to enlist a few). 71 patients were followed up at 6 weeks and 58 patients were followed up at both 6 weeks and 3 months. At end of 3 months (in the subset of patients who had both the post operative follow ups at 6 weeks and 3 months), 82.7% of patients had all their preoperative hopes and fears resolved and 8.6% had partially resolved old or new hopes or fears. Another 8.6% of patients of those followed up both at 6 weeks and 3 months had new hopes or fears at 3 months post operatively. The achievement of hopes and resolution of fears were statistically significant with the change in the scores of POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 post operatively.

The results obtained from the study instrument also showed that maximum number of patients (90.8%) had problems related to symptom resolution as their 1st priority and all the others (9.18 ) had daily activity related problems as their 1st priority. The scores obtained for affect on the various aspects of life in the study instrument was significantly correlating with the pre operative POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 scales.
and their subscales except for problems related to defecation and CRADI8 subscale scores. This correlation can be quantified significantly using simple linear equation.

**Conclusion :**

The hopes of patients undergoing surgery for pelvic organ prolapse are mainly related to symptom resolution and secondly, to increasing daily activity. Understanding the individual concerns of patients can give a better in sight to the treating physician in order to improve patient satisfaction. Unrealistic hopes and fears can lead to dissatisfaction which can be easily dealt with adequate preoperative counseling addressing these issues. The validated condition specific questionnaires (POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7) lack individualization of information and descriptive details which can be obtained by the study instrument. The POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7 have not been validated for our community and considering the vast number of languages and cultures in our community the administration of these validated questionnaires can be challenging to us. The study instrument can be used as a simple tool to assess the same in our patients with the advantage of being both descriptive and individualized. The scores obtained for affect on various aspects of life in the study instrument were significantly correlating with the scores of the validated QOL questionnaires POPDI 20 and PFIQ 7, except for scores related to defecation problems and CRADI 8 subscale. Using simple linear calculation these study instrument scores could be converted to and correlated to the validated POPDI 20 and PFIQ7 scores.

This study provides a foundation to explore another tool for outcome measures in patients undergoing surgery for pelvic organ prolapse in our community.