Original Article



Comparative Study of Effectiveness of Transabdominal Preperitoneal (TAPP) or Totally Extraperitoneal (TEP) Technique for Bilateral Inguinal Hernia: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Laparoscopic surgery was first used to repair inguinal hernias in 1983 by physician Ralph Ger. These days, transabdominal preperitoneal (TAPP) and completely extraperitoneal (TEP) repair are the most frequently performed laparoscopic procedures. Different studies have shown differing results with both approaches. There is a dearth of information regarding the comparative analysis of each of these surgical techniques in India, especially in the north.

Aims/ objective: To compare the outcome of TAPP and TEP techniques in bilateral, uncomplicated inguinal hernia.

Materials and Method: 50 patients had undergone inguinal hernia repair via TAPP technique and 50 patients with TEP technique. Pain severity was measured using visual analogue scale (VAS). Duration of surgery, duration of surgery and hospital stay was noted. Incidence of complications from surgery to 7 days of follow-up was noted. A follow-up was also done at 3 months after discharge for pain and recurrence.

Results: Pain severity with respect to VAS score were significantly lower in patients undergoing hernia surgery via TAPP technique versus TEP technique (p>0.05). Patients undergoing hernia repair via either TAPP or TEP technique had similar length of hospital stay (p>0.05). There was significantly less duration of surgery via TEP technique as compared to TAPP technique (p<0.05). However, patients undergoing TAPP hernia repair took less time to attain routine activity (p<0.05). There was no significant difference between TAPP and TEP group with respect to incidence of complications (p>0.05).

Conclusion: Inguinal hernia repair via TAPP technique had greater intra-operative time but less pain post-operative pain and less time to attain routine activity.

Keywords: Inguinal Hernia, TAPP, TEP, Pain Severity, Duration of Surgery.

INTRODUCTION

protruding portion of the abdominal cavity content via the inguinal canal is called an inguinal hernia. This kind of hernia is the most prevalent and primarily affects men. It is claimed to be frequently linked to aging and persistent abdominal strain¹. With a 5% to 7% occurrence, hernias are a widespread issue in the modern world. Because so many people work in agriculture, building, lifting weights, and other physical labour, there is a significant health care burden in developing nations like India, where the prevalence of hernias is significantly higher. About 75% of all groin hernias are in the inguinal region^{2,3}.

Ger et al. performed the first laparoscopic hernia repair in 1990⁴. Hernioplasty can be performed using a variety of methods, including robotic TAPP, completely extraperitoneal (TEP), and laparoscopic transabdominal preperitoneal (TAPP). Establishing a synthetic mesh within the pre-peritoneal region is the fundamental idea behind all procedures⁵⁻⁷.

A substantial number of hernias in underdeveloped nations are discovered after the patient is sick, which increases the risk of morbidity and death¹. General surgeons working in nations with low resources have

therapeutic problems while managing inguinal hernias. The absence of contemporary medical equipment like mesh and laparoscopy and the late onset of the illness are two of the main disadvantages in underdeveloped nations⁸.

It is evident from the fact that more than 100 different techniques for repairing inguinal hernias have been documented and used at some point in the past century that none have been deemed unquestionably better than the others. Nowadays, there are just three methods that have been shown effective by science and are advised for usage in therapeutic settings: (1) Shouldice's Method (2) Lichtenstein's hernioplasty with open mesh (3) Hernioplasty using laparoscopic posterior mesh.

Regarding the resources needed, the materials needed, the difficulty of mastery, complications and recurrence, recovering time, and the rates of acute and chronic pain, each approach has unique benefits and drawbacks. Nonetheless, mesh repair for inguinal hernias has become commonplace in recent years. Tension-free mesh repairs are becoming more and more common because to the lower recurrence rate (less than 1% with mesh compared to over 15% with tissue repairs), quicker recovery times, and less postoperative pain. Among the surgeon's tools,



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laparoscopy repair of inguinal hernias is a comparatively recent development⁹.

Laparoscopic surgery was first used to repair inguinal hernias in 1983 by physician Ralph Ger¹⁰. These days, transabdominal preperitoneal (TAPP) and completely extraperitoneal (TEP) repair are the most frequently performed laparoscopic procedures. A synthetic mesh and general anaesthesia are required for both surgeries. Entry to the hernia site through the peritoneal cavity is required for TAPP. During TEP, the peritoneal cavity does not get penetrated. Instead, the preperitoneal plane is used to reach the hernia site, and the hernia aperture outside the peritoneum is sealed with mesh. Any direct, indirect, as well as femoral hernias can be seen by using either technique, which makes the whole inguinal floor visible¹¹.

Advocates of laparoscopic repair for hernias, both bilateral and recurrent, highlight the benefits of this procedure. Laparoscopic surgery can be used to treat bilateral hernias concurrently, ruling out any hernias on the other side that may not have been discovered. Contralateral hernias can be promptly detected with great efficacy using the TAPP approach¹².

The results of previous research on pain are controversial. Early postoperative periods following TAPP procedure were associated with increased discomfort (Krishna et al., Bansal et al.). Numerous further research has not discovered any distinction in discomfort between TEP and TAPP procedures^{13,14}.

As a result, different studies have shown differing results with both approaches; some have found them to be comparable, while others have found TEP to be superior. The selection of surgery is specifically influenced by a number of patient features. There is a dearth of information regarding the comparative analysis of each of these surgical techniques in India, especially in the north.

Hence, we decided to undertake this study to compare the outcome of TAPP and TEP techniques in bilateral, uncomplicated inguinal hernia. The objectives were to compare the pain severity with respect to visual analogue scale (VAS), duration of surgery, duration of hospital stay, incidence of complications and recurrence rate between two groups.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was an open label randomized controlled trial with parallel 1:1 allocation ratio conducted on patients of inguinal hernia in department of surgery of tertiary care hospital of India from July 2022 to January 2023. The study was started after taking institutional ethics committee approval and taking written informed consent from patients with inguinal hernia under the recommendation of good clinical practice and declaration of Helsinki.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Patients of male sex of age between 18-75 years
- Patients with reducible Bilateral inguinal hernia

- Patients planned for laparoscopic mesh hernioplasty
- Patients with ASA status I or II

Exclusion Criteria:

- Patients planned for additional surgical procedures like bowel resection and anastomosis.
- Patients with complicated and irreducible hernia, or needing emergency procedure
- Patients with contraindication to laparoscopic hernia repair such as adhesions caused in previous abdominal surgery, or giant hernia.
- Patients with coagulopathies or any other systemic illness.

Sample size: With mean VAS score of 0.96 ± 0.4 in TEP group and 1.28 in TAPP group reported in previous study¹³, the minimum sample size required to generate 95% power with 0.05 alpha value was found to be 82 with 41 patients in each group. To adjust for expected 15% attrition rate, 100 patients were randomized to 50 patents in each group.

Randomization was done using web-generated random numbers.

Surgical procedure

Following the skin test, a single preventive injection of ceftriaxone 1 gm was given intravenously in the preoperative area. Every patient had a catheter for urine. Using the traditional three ports approach, all surgeries were carried out under general anaesthesia (GA) with the patients in the supine and Trendelenburg positions.

TAPP Technique

After GA induction, pneumo-peritoneum was established via the supra-umbilical port employing a Verres needle. One 10 mm camera port was positioned in the supraumbilical area once the intra-abdominal pressure reached 14 mm of Hg. The other two 5 mm ports were maintained in both sides of the mid-clavicular line at the same level of the umbilicus. A five-centimetre peritoneal incision was performed from the cranial to the inguinal defect following an abdominal examination. During preperitoneal dissection, the medially located Cooper's ligament was discovered.

The opposing side's Cooper's ligament served as the medial boundary of dissection. The hernia sac was isolated from the cord structures when the cord structures were discovered. The lateral limit of dissection was the anterior superior iliac spine (ASIS) to the ipsilateral side. The point where the vas deferens turns medially was the lowest limit of dissection. A 15×12 centimetre polypropylene mesh was positioned in the pre-peritoneal area following correct dissection. After repairing the supra-umbilical fascial defect using polyglactin suture, absorbable suture was used to sew the peritoneal flap. Non-absorbable nylon suture was then used to close the port site.



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TEP Technique

Following the installation of GA, a 10 mm port was positioned somewhat beneath the umbilicus to accommodate the 10 mm 30 0 telescope. Telescopic blunt dissection was used to generate a preperitoneal gap till the pubic symphysis was visible in the midline. Two more 5 mm working ports were added during the dissection process; one was placed directly above the pubic symphysis, and the other in the middle of the space between the pubic symphysis and the umbilical port. The anterior superior iliac spine was the lateral boundary of preperitoneal flap dissection.

With meticulous dissection, the peritoneum was pushed as low as possible to reveal the deep ring, triangle of doom, psoas major muscle, and nerves. A 15 × 12 centimetre polypropylene mesh was unfolded in the preperitoneal space following the removal of the hernial sac in order to completely cover any potential hernial sites. It was not with a suture or clips. After secured the pneumoperitoneum was released, 1 or 2 interrupted sutures using polyglactin were used to close the umbilical fascia.

Post-operative period

The urinary catheter was removed immediately after the completion of the procedure. Post-operatively, an injection of paracetamol 1 gram was infused intravenously every eight hours on the day of surgery in all patients of both the groups as per the standard protocol of our department. The additional analgesic requirement was fulfilled by injection of diclofenac 75 mg by the intravenous route, as needed if the visual analogue scale (VAS) score was more than three. An assessment of pain was made using the VAS score in the postoperative and follow-up periods.

Duration of surgery, duration of surgery and hospital stay was noted. Incidence of complications from surgery to 7 days of follow-up was noted. A follow-up was also done at 3 months after discharge for pain and recurrence.

Statistical Analysis

Data from patients with inguinal hernia were presented in tabular form using Microsoft Excel 365 and transferred to SPSS version 24 for further statistical analysis. Continuous data such as age, duration of surgery, length of hospital stay, and VAS score were expressed as mean ± SD (standard deviation). Statistical significance of difference in continuous data between TAPP and TEP group was evaluated by unpaired t-test. Categorical data, such as incidence of post-operative complications were reported as percentages and frequencies and then compared by chisquare or Fisher's exact test. A p-value of less than 0.05 was taken as cut-off for statistical significance.

RESULTS

50 patients had undergone inguinal hernia repair via TAPP technique and 50 patients with TEP technique. Their baseline demographic and clinical characteristics is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Baseline Demographic and ClinicalCharacteristics between TAPP and TEP Group

Parameters	Group TAPP N = 50	Group TEP N = 50	P-Value		
Age in years (mean ± SD)	49.87 ± 6.24	51.23 ± 6.09	0.27		
Type of Hernia					
Direct	18	20	0.84		
Indirect	32	30			
Extent					
Incomplete	39	44	0.29		
Complete	11	6			
ASA Grade					
1	22	24	0.84		
2	28	26			

Most of the patients belonged to 45-60 years of age group in either TAPP or TEP group. Indirect and incomplete hernia were predominant type in either TAPP or TEP group. There was not significant difference between TAPP or TEP group with respect to age, type and extent of hernia, and ASA grade (p>0.05)

Table 2: Comparison of Pain Severity (VAS Score) betweenTAPP and TEP Group

VAS Score in mean ± SD	Group TAPP N = 50	Group TEP N = 50	P-Value (Unpaired t-test)
VAS at 1 hour	5.87 ± 0.47	6.08 ± 0.53	0.04
VAS at 6 hours	3.12 ± 0.26	4.29 ± 0.41	<0.0001
VAS at 24 hours	2.04 ± 0.35	2.97 ± 0.38	<0.0001
VAS at 7 days	0.17 ± 0.04	0.99 ± 0.13	<0.0001
VAS at 3 Months	0.11 ± 0.02	0.13 ± 0.03	0.0002

Pain severity with respect to VAS score were significantly lower in patients undergoing hernia surgery via TAPP technique versus TEP technique (p>0.05).

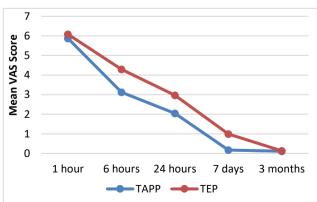


Figure 1: Comparison of VAS Score between Two Groups

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Table 3: Comparison of Duration of Surgery, Length ofHospital Stay and Time to Attain Routine Activity betweenTAPP and TEP Group

Parameters	Group	Group	P-Value
	TAPP	TEP	(Unpaired
	N = 50	N = 50	t-test)
Duration of Surgery in	97.66 ±	78.43	<0.0001
Minutes (mean ± SD)	10.59	± 8.74	
Length of Hospital Stay in	41.22 ±	40.17	0.19
Hours (mean ± SD)	4.07	± 3.95	
Time to Attain Routine Activity in Days (mean ± SD)	31.57 ± 2.86	33.36 ± 3.07	0.03

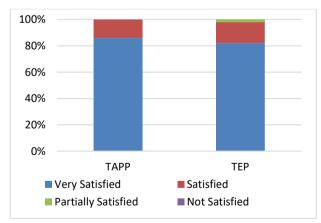
Patients undergoing hernia repair via either TAPP or TEP technique had similar length of hospital stay (p>0.05). There was significantly less duration of surgery via TEP technique as compared to TAPP technique (p<0.05). However, patients undergoing TAPP hernia repair took less time to attain routine activity (p<0.05).

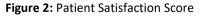
Table 4: Comparison of Complications between TAPP and

 TEP Group

Complications	Number of Patients		
	Group TAPP N = 50	Group TEP N = 50	
Hematoma	1	2	
Seroma	3	4	
Wound Infection	2	2	
Scrotal Oedema	4	5	
Intestinal Obstruction	1	0	
Recurrence	1	0	

There was no significant difference between TAPP and TEP group with respect to incidence of complications (p>0.05).





DISCUSSION

The current study is an RCT conducted in a hospital to compare the results of the two laparoscopic hernia repair procedures. In this investigation, there was a statistically significant difference between two groups' operating times. The stitching of the peritoneum for covering the mesh may have contributed to the prolonged operational time for TAPP in the present research. This outcome was in line with the findings of the earlier investigation¹⁴. On the other hand, operating times for TEP were longer than for TAPP in two studies by Gong et al. (including uncomplicated unilateral inguinal hernia) as well as Sharma et al. (including uncomplicated bilateral inguinal hernia) ^{145,16}. They cited two factors as the cause of the longer intraoperative stay in TEP: a small workspace and trouble understanding anatomical landmarks.

One of the most frequent and problematic complaints during the recovery phase following hernia surgery is pain. In our investigation, we found that the TEP group experienced noticeably more pain than the TAPP group. In comparison to the TAPP group, the TEP group required more extra analgesics. These findings aligned with those of previous research¹⁶.

According to our research, the TEP group may have experienced more discomfort because of a thorough dissection that extended from the umbilicus onto the pubic symphysis. The TEP group may have experienced more discomfort because they underwent a higher number of indirect inguinal hernia operations than the TAPP group did. Indirect inguinal hernias experienced more postoperative pain than direct hernias, as demonstrated by Sharma et al.¹⁶. There was no discernible difference in pain after surgery between the TAPP and TEP groups, according to the Varcus et al. study¹⁷. But according to one study, the TAPP group experienced more pain than the TEP group¹⁸.

Both the patient as well as the hospital incur additional costs as a result of the length of stay. Because laparoscopic hernia surgery is a minimally invasive treatment, it has a shorter postoperative hospital stay than open hernia repair. The mean duration of hospital stay for the two groups in our study was similar. There could be two possible explanations for the lack of a significant difference in length of stay in our study. First off, neither group's patients were released from the hospital as soon as possible because the majority of them came from distant and isolated locations. Our findings agreed with those of three previous research^{16, 19-21}.

In the Kockerling et al. trial, the TAPP group had lengthier hospital stays than the TEP group because they had more full hernia cases and had undergone surgery with larger defects^{22,23}. Extended hospital stays are a result of a higher rate of postoperative complications. The TAPP group in research by Sudarshan et al. spent more time in the hospital than the TEP group, but the cause for this difference in length was not stated.²⁴ The TAPP group had a noticeably longer post-operative hospital time in the meta-analysis conducted by Bracale et al.²⁵

With regard to the occurrence of complications, there was no discernible difference between the TAPP and TEP groups. Despite the fact that none of the groups experienced any serious problems, Bansal et al. found that the TAPP group had a statistically significant greater



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frequency of cord edema¹⁴. By the time of the three-month follow-up, none of the patients still had seroma. The rate of wound infections did not differ statistically significantly between the two groups. TAPP accesses the posterior wall of the inguinal canal intra-abdominally, but TEP requires more extensive dissection to achieve its target. This could explain the variation in the frequency of postoperative seroma and hematoma. The likelihood of hematoma and seroma may be higher due to the raw surfaces produced during TEP dissection.

This study's short follow-up period to determine late postoperative pain or recurrence was a limitation. Even so, an early manifestation of recurrence may not always result from a failed primary repair. Additional research with follow-up periods of at least a year could yield additional proof that one strategy is better than the other. The results of both approaches may have a high degree of dependability in the meta-analysis.

CONCLUSION

Inguinal hernia repair via TAPP technique had greater intra-operative time but less pain post-operative pain and less time to attain routine activity. Hematoma, seroma, wound infection and scrotal oedema were common complications but their incidence was less than 10% and similar in TAPP or TEP group. The TAPP technique is a viable laparoscopic option for the patient with an inguinal hernia who wants an easy recovery in the initial postoperative phase. Long term studies should be conducted to effectively compare long-term recurrence rate between TAPP and TEP technique.

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