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Thoracoscopic traction technique in long gap esophageal atresia: Entering a new era

David C Van Der Zee

University Medical Center Utrecht, The Netherlands

Objective: To describe the evolution from delayed management of long gap esophageal atresia to thoracoscopic treatment directly after birth without the placement of a gastrostomy.

Background: Long gap esophageal atresia remains a challenge for pediatric surgeons. Over the years several techniques have been described to deal with the problem of the distance between the proximal and distal esophagus. More recently a traction technique has been advocated. With the advent of minimal invasive surgery the thoracoscopic elongation technique has been developed.

Methods: Retrospective description of a single center experience with the thoracoscopic treatment of patients with long gap esophageal atresia over a 7 year period.

Results: between 2007 and 2013 eleven children with long gap esophageal atresia were treated by thoracoscopic elongation technique. In two children the procedure failed. In another two direct anastomosis was possible with the use of intrathoracic traction. Seven children successfully underwent thoracoscopic traction with delayed primary anastomosis. Initially all patients had a gastrostomy. During the course, the technique evolved into delayed primary anastomosis directly after birth without the use of a gastrostomy.

Conclusion: Thoracoscopic elongation technique in long gap esophageal atresia is not only feasible, it can nowadays also be performed directly after birth without the use of a gastrostomy. With this development we have entered a new era in the management of long-gap esophageal atresia.

Biography

David C Van Der Zee has been Pediatric Surgeon since 1991. He defended his thesis "Materno-embryonic transfusion and congenital malformations" successfully in 1996. He has published over 100 peer reviewed papers. He is involved in education and training in IPEG, EAES, NVKCh. He has been Chief of the Department of Pediatric Surgery in Utrecht since 2006 and has been appointed as Professor in Pediatric Surgery in 2009. He gave the keynote lecture at the JSES on training in endoscopic surgery in children and neonates and at ELSA. He currently is Editor in several international journals and is 2nd Vice-President of IPEG.

D.C.vanderZee@umcutrecht.nl