

Annular closure device lowers reoperation risk 4 years after lumbar discectomy

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Abstract

Objective: To determine whether implanting an annular closure device (ACD) following a lumbar discectomy procedure in patients with large defects in the annulus fibrosus lowers the risk of reoperation after 4 years.

Methods: In a multicenter randomized trial, patients with large annular defects following single-level lumbar discectomy were intraoperatively randomized to additionally receive an ACD or no treatment (Controls). Clinical and imaging follow-up were performed at routine intervals over 4 years of follow-up. Main outcomes included reoperations at the treated lumbar level, leg pain scores on a visual analog scale, Oswestry Disability Index (ODI), and Physical Component Summary (PCS) and Mental Component Summary (MCS) scores from the SF-36 questionnaire.

Results: Among 550 patients (ACD 272, Control 278), the risk of reoperation over 4 years was 14.4% with ACD and 21.1% with Controls ($P=0.03$). The reduction in reoperation risk with ACD was not significantly influenced by patient age ($P=0.51$), sex ($P=0.34$), body mass index ($P=0.21$), smoking status ($P=0.85$), level of herniation ($P=0.26$), leg pain severity at baseline ($P=0.90$), or ODI at baseline ($P=0.54$). All patient-reported outcomes improved in each group from baseline to 4 years (all $P<0.001$). The percentage of patients who achieved the minimal clinically important difference without a reoperation was proportionally higher in the ACD group compared to Controls for leg pain ($P=0.07$), ODI ($P=0.10$), PCS ($P=0.02$), and MCS ($P=0.06$).

Conclusions: The addition of a bone-anchored ACD following lumbar discectomy in patients with large post-surgical annular defects reduces the risk of reoperation and provides better long-term pain and disability relief over 4 years compared to lumbar discectomy only.

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Reducing the incidence of reherniation and reoperation in skeletally mature patients with radiculopathy (with or without back pain) attributed to a posterior or posterolateral herniation, and confirmed by history, physical examination and imaging studies which demonstrate neural compression using MRI to treat a large annular defect (between 4-6 mm tall and between 6-10 mm wide) following a primary discectomy procedure (excision of herniated intervertebral disc) at a single level between L4 and S1.

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