

The Unstable Pertrochanteric Femur Fracture In Elderly Patient; To Fix Or To Replace? A Review Of 3 Patients

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INTRODUCTION:

Pertrochanteric femur fractures are common injuries in the elderly. However, deciding on the mode of surgery in this group of patient with the unstable type is difficult. Although traditionally, internal fixation has been the choice of most surgeons, there are significant complications associated with fixation. Hip replacement may be a better option as it obviates complications related to internal fixation, and permit rapid mobilization¹. We present a review of three cases of unstable pertrochanteric femur fracture in the elderly treated with hemiarthroplasty.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Three patients, 85 years(A), 79 years(B) and 82 years(C) with unstable pertrochanteric femur fracture were treated with bipolar hemiarthroplasty. Patient C had a failed prior proximal femoral nail fixation, and was revised with hemiarthroplasty. They were reviewed for postoperative recovery and complication.

RESULTS:

All were able to bear weight with walking frame on third postoperative day. They were discharged between fourth to fifth day after surgery. Patients were reviewed at clinic at 2 weeks and 1 month after surgery and there was no implant related complication such as infection and dislocation.

DISCUSSIONS:

Most surgeons would favour fixation in the unstable pertrochanteric femur fractures, as healing of fracture may be expected. However, complications such as loss of fixation and non union are common, necessitating revision surgery. A single surgery, permitting rapid mobilization with lower possibility for reoperation may perhaps, be the ideal type of surgery in this niche group of patient. Hip replacement enables patient to bear weight

immediately and there is no fear of implant loosening or screw cut out from femoral head. Technically, the difficulty in performing a hip replacement in these fractures may be related to ability to attach the trochanter during the stem insertion.

CONCLUSION:

Hip replacement is a viable primary surgical option in the elderly with unstable pertrochanteric femur fracture.

REFERENCES:

1. Kiran K et al. Bipolar Hemiarthroplasty in Unstable Intertrochanteric Fractures in Elderly: A Prospective Study. *J Clin Diagn Res.* 2013; 7(8): 1669-1671.