

Correspondence

Post hemorrhoidectomy pain. A randomized controlled trial

To the Editor

I have read with interest the article by Al-Mulhim et al,¹ "Post hemorrhoidectomy pain, a randomized controlled trial", and I agree with the authors from what is written in the literature,² and from personal experience with patients that metronidazole does reduce pain after diathermy hemorrhoidectomy. However, few queries have risen. One of these concerns the hospital stay (3.2 nights for group 1 and 4.1 nights for group 2), I wonder what kept the patients this long time in the hospital, was it waiting for the first bowel motion post operatively, or some patients developed bleeding? The authors did not state the cause of this "long" stay. After performing diathermy hemorrhoidectomy in our institution, we discharge patients usually the next morning.

The authors stated that "...earlier complications consisted of acute urinary retention in 4 patients (4%) in group 2 but one patient in metronidazole group". Were these patients who had suture ligation of the hemorrhoid pedicle, which can incorporate fibers of the internal sphincter in the ligature? Was the urinary retention less in the metronidazole group due to the effect of the antibiotic? Al-Mulhim et al¹ in their study, prescribed metronidazole 500 mg orally 3 times a day and continued for 3 days. Carapeti et al² continued metronidazole 400 mg 3 times a day for 7 days. If the desirable effect which is pain control was achieved in 3

days, so it is cost effective to continue metronidazole for the period that Al-Mulhim et al² stated.

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Reply from the Author

We thank Dr. Ahmed Uraiqat for his comments. Regarding the hospital stay, we kept the patients for a long time because of the study; otherwise, we discharge the patients next morning (hospital stay is secondary outcome measure). The early and late complication in both group appears similar and we do not know if metronidazole has effect on the urinary retention. We think the effect of metronidazole in 3 days is achieved.

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References

1. Al-Mulhim AS, Ali AM, Al-Masoud N, Alwahidi A. Post hemorrhoidectomy pain, a randomized controlled trial. *Saudi Med J* 2006; 27: 1538-1541.
2. Carapeti EA, Kamm MA, McDonald PJ, Phillips RK. Double-blind randomised controlled trial of effect of metronidazole on pain after day-case haemorrhoidectomy. *Lancet* 1998; 351: 169-172.