Reconstructive REVIEW

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE

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Does Implant Design Affect Hospital Metrics and Patents Outcomes? TKA Utilizing a “Fast-Track” Protocol

Buch RG, Schroeder L, Buch R, Eberle R

Abstract

Background: “Fast-Track” protocols have been introduced in TKA with the intention to increase health care savings while maintaining or improving patient outcomes. The influence of the implant design in a “Fast-Track” setting has not been described yet. The primary goal of this study was to compare a customized implant with standard off-the-shelf (OTS) devices when utilizing a “Fast-Track” protocol.

Methods: Sixty-two (62) patients were prospectively enrolled at a single center and implanted with either a customized or a standard off-the-shelf implant resulting in thirty (30) patients being treated with an OTS design and thirty-two (32) with the customized design. The same institutional fast-track protocol was utilized on all patients and included pre-, intra-, and postoperative medical treatment. We assessed total length of stay (LOS), discharge destination and range of motion at 6-8 weeks post-op and at an average of 16 months post-op follow-up to compare the OTS implant with the customized device. Implant survivorship was assessed at a minimum of 25 months post-op.

Results: Using the fast track protocol we were able to decrease overall LOS to 2.1 days versus 3.6 days prior to introduction of the protocol. The use of the customized implant further reduced LOS significantly to 1.6 days. Significantly higher number of patients who got implanted with the customized device (66%) were discharged within 24 hours than in the OTS group (30%). Patients treated with the customized implant were found to be discharged home more often than patients treated with the OTS implants (97% vs. 80%) and achieved higher range of motion both at 6-8 weeks (114° vs. 101°) and at an average of 16 months (122° vs. 114°) than patients who got treated with the OTS device. At an average follow-up of 28 months, there was 1 implant revision in the customized group (due to tibial fracture resulting from patient fall). For the OTS group there was 1 implant revision (late infection) and 1 poly swap (due to instability).

Discussion: Based on our analysis we observed a positive influence of the customized device on patient outcomes and hospital metrics and we therefore conclude that the implant choice is an important factor for TKA in a “fast-track” setting.

Background

In the current health care environment there is an increased focus on health care savings while maintaining or improving patient outcomes. This has become an important factor for patients undergoing total knee arthroplasty (TKA) with practicing physicians constantly aiming to increase the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the procedure.
dure. One methodology to decrease patient’s length of stay (LOS) is to incorporate a fast track protocol and thereby reducing per patient burden on the hospital. “Fast-track” has been defined as a hospitalization which provides best possible evidence-based treatment, using fewer clinical resources within a hospital stay while maintaining high patient satisfaction and few complications [1]. Success criteria have been described as reduction of perioperative morbidity, optimized pain management, shorter convalescence, a reduction in postoperative length of stay and a rapid functional recovery due to early mobilization [1-3].

Previous studies examining clinical outcomes following a fast track protocol have shown that changing patient care has its benefits and drawbacks. They have investigated various factors such as the type of anesthesia, postoperative rehabilitation and optimized pain relief that can influence faster discharge while maintaining optimum patient care [4-6]. Preoperative anemia in fast-track TKA however has been seen to be associated with an increased risk of patients receiving transfusion during admission, increased risk of readmission within 90 days from the procedure and increased risk of LOS of more than 5 days [7].

To our knowledge, the effect of an implant design on overcoming these challenges has not been examined. Customized implants, designed to provide optimal fit by replicating patient individual knee geometry, and particularly, restoration of the patient’s femoral condylar anatomy, have been introduced to the market with the goal to achieve better patient outcome, faster recovery and mobilization postsurgery and therefore reducing the time of hospitalization.

Hence the purpose of our study was to compare standard off-the-shelf implants with a customized TKA design in a well-defined “Fast-Track” setting to determine, if implant design has any significant influence on hospital metrics or patient outcomes.

Methods

In this single-center case series sixty-two (62) patients were prospectively enrolled and were implanted with one of two implant systems. All surgeries were performed by the same surgeon. All patients consented for their data to be used for research purposes. Patients were given the option to choose between the customized and a standard off-the-shelf (OTS) implant based on the preference for timing of the surgery. Patients who preferred their procedure to be on the next possible date were treated with the OTS implant and patients who were willing to wait 6 weeks, the timespan needed for the implant manufacturing process, with the customized design.

This resulted in thirty (30) patients being treated with an OTS (53% female) (Columbus® Total Knee System, B Braun Melsungen AG, Hessen, Germany; Vanguard® Knee System, Zimmer Biomet, Warsaw, Indiana) and thirty-two (32) with the customized implant (41% female) (iTotal®G2, Cruciate Retaining TKA, ConforMIS, Inc., Billerica, MA). Regardless of component brand, all patients in both groups received a cruciate retaining TKA level of constraint. Patient demographics in terms of age at the time of surgery (57.2yrs OTS and 57.3yrs Customized; p=0.969), BMI (31.0 OTS and 33.4 Customized; p=0.116) and 17 tracked comorbid conditions (e.g. Diabetes, coronary artery disease, hypertension etc.) were collected preoperatively to ensure patients of both groups were comparable. No statically significant difference could be seen in the observation (Tables 1 and 2). During hospitalization the same institutional fast track protocol was utilized on all patients included in this study. As such it involved preoperative medical treatment with Hibiclens® (Möllylycke, Norcross, Georgia, USA) daily for three days and Bactro-
ban® nasal ointment (GlaxoSmithKlein, Brentford, London, UK) starting 48 hours prior surgery to remove potentially pathogenic bacteria from the nasopharyngeal region as well as patients ceasing all anticoagulants 5 days prior to the procedure. All study participants underwent an educational review consisting of a preparation course, a CD and a pamphlet to inform about the operational flow, possible complications and evaluating and setting patient’s expectations. A standard set of medications (Table 3) was given to all subjects participating in this study pre-, at and post-surgery. Post-operatively all patients were mobilized within 3 hours and were treated with CPM or Active Ice® 3.0 (Polar Products, Inc., Stow, OH, USA) if needed. As for criteria of discharge, patients had to be able to walk over 100 feet, get out of bed independently and needed to have at least 60° of flexion. Both, discharge criteria and the time of discharge was determined by physical therapist and hospitalist, independent of the surgeon.

During the data collection we assessed patient’s time of discharge, the total length of stay in the hospital (LOS) as well as their discharge destination. Patient’s range of motion (ROM) and the need for walking aids were examined at their 6-8 week post-op visit and at an average of 16 months post-op. All adverse events including manipulation under anesthesia (MUA) and revisions were followed up to a minimum of 25 months post-op (average 28 months).

Statistical analysis was performed in Minitab 17.1 (MiniTab Inc, PA-USA). All data was included for the analysis. Continuous variables were tested for normality prior to statistical comparisons. Variables with a normal distribution were compared using 2 tailed t-test assuming unequal variances. Non-normal variables were tested using Mann-Whitney test. Categorical variables were compared between the customized and OTS outcomes using frequency counts. Significance was determined using a Fisher Exact Test. A p value of 0.05 was used to determine a significant difference between the customized group and OTS group outcomes.

Results

Overall, when utilizing the “Fast Track” protocol, LOS was decreased to 2.1 days versus 3.6 days, which was the average LOS after TKA for patients in our institution that did not undergo the fast track protocol.

The data analysis revealed that the average length of stay using standard OTS implant designs was found to be 2.7 days (range, 1-6 days) and 1.6 days (range, 1-6 days) when the customized TKA got implanted. This difference was found to be of statistical significance (p=0.004). Al-
hospital within 24 hours post-surgery (66%) compared to patients from the OTS TKA group (30%) (Figure 1) (p=0.006). When assessing patients discharge destination a significantly higher proportion of patients discharged home was seen in the customized group (97%) compared to the OTS group (80%) (Figure 2) (p=0.05).

At the 6-8 week follow-up time point significantly less patients with a customized implant needed a walking aid (13%) compared to patients with an off-the-shelf implant (60%) (p=0.02). During that time period we found a difference in range of motion between both groups with patients who got an OTS TKA implanted (101°) experiencing 13% less ROM on average than patients with the patient specific implant (114°)(Figure 3).

Range of motion at an average of 16-month follow-up continued to be significantly higher among patients with the customized TKA (122° vs. 114° p<0.001). Additionally, a significantly higher proportion of patients with the customized TKA than patients with the standard TKA were found to have a ROM of ≥120° at the final time of follow-up (84% vs. 45%; p=0.003). None of the patient with the customized implant showed a ROM of <100° compared to 13% of patients with the OTS implant at the time of the final follow-up (Table 4). This was shown to be of statistical significance (p=0.046).

For adverse event reporting the average follow-up of the cohort was 28 months. Post-operatively there were two manipulations under anesthesia in the customized group and one among the OTS patients (p=0.99). There were no returns or re-admissions to hospital in a 60-day period. One patient in the customized group underwent a revision procedure at 30 months post op due to a fractured tibia resulting from a fall that loosened the tibial baseplate. In the OTS group there was 1 patient who developed a late infection at 2.5 years and had to be revised. In addition, one patient in the OTS group underwent a poly swap procedure to correct instability.

Discussion

Fast-track surgery has been implemented to improve surgical management by improving perioperative care and decreasing postoperative complications and therefore shorten the time of full recovery and reduce the need for hospitalization and convalescence. The “Fast-Track” program has been introduced by Kehlet et al and been developed and applied to clinical practice over the last 15 years [8,9]. With the purpose of enhancing the cost-effectiveness and general efficiency of health care, multiple factors during patient’s time of hospitalization and their impact on patient’s recovery have been analyzed. Optimized pain management, transfusion strategy, rehabilitation and physiotherapy, patient’s information, fluid management and anaesthetic technique has led to a LOS of 1-2 days after TKA and better patient post-operative outcomes [4,6,10,11].

To our knowledge the potential influence of the implant design on peri- and post-operative outcomes after TKA in a fast-track setting has not yet been described. We believe this is the first study to compare the effect of the knee implant design on length of stay and hospital metrics in a defined fast-track program. Our study was not without limitations which have to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. This study was carried out prospectively with patients selecting the implant design. Including blind randomization of the patient / component matching may have eliminated potential selection bias between the two study groups. Therefore we had little influence on the composition of the study cohorts which might have led to inequalities between the study groups. However, since patient demographics and comorbid conditions were similar and no statistically significant difference was detected between the two groups we consider our result to be valid. With a total of 62 patients participated in this study our patient cohort was relatively small. Nevertheless, the dif-

Table 4. Patient’s ROM at an average of 16 months.

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<th>ROM ≥ 120 degrees (%)</th>
<th>OTS</th>
<th>Customized</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ROM &lt; 100 degrees (%)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.046</td>
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</table>
ferences seen between the groups were large enough to be of significance and we believe they would be similar for a larger study population. We suggest that further research with a larger study population should be undertaken in the future. For this study all TKAs were performed by a single surgeon who is experienced with all devices used. Experience and a high expertise in performing TKA has been shown to result in better outcomes and additional studies at different sites should be conducted to verify if the implant design does have an impact on a faster discharge. Lastly, fast track surgery can be implemented in multiple ways with the same guidelines but different protocols. Our results only reflect the fast-track protocol we utilized in this study. As there is no single definition of the “fast track protocol” in literature we propound that our protocol should be used in future research in order to validate our findings.

Overall, we observed a reduction in length of stay of 0.4 days after implementing the fast track protocol (3.1 days to 2.7 days). However, when using the customized implant, the average length of stay was reduced by a further 1.1 days. Culler et al compared LOS after TKA of patients treated with a customized implant and patients treated with an OTS design and noticed a tendency of reduced LOS in the customized group. Additionally, they found that a significantly greater proportion of patients in the customized study arm were being discharged from their TKA hospitalization in <3 days (<72 hours from admission to discharge) than in the OTS arm [12]. We can therefore agree with and support their findings that patients treated with the customized implant experience shorter LOS than patients with the OTS design.

In a study to evaluate whether there is a significant difference in surgical time, intraoperative blood loss, postoperative range of motion and length of stay between customized and OTS TKA Schwarzkopf et al observed a decreased range of motion with customized compared to off-the-shelf implants [13]. When assessing postoperative ROM, we had different findings. Patients with the customized implant design showed significantly better results both, at 6-8 weeks after surgery and at an average of 16 months post-op, than patients treated with the OTS implant. As having more than 60° of flexion was a discharge criterion in our study we believe that providing better results in ROM early after surgery could be one reason for higher ROM of customized patients.

The number of patients being discharged to a rehab facility (SNFs) was significantly higher in the OTS study group than among the customized patients. Additionally, more patients in the customized group went home after their time of hospitalization than patients in the OTS group. Reasons for a discharge to rehab care facilities have been examined in previous research and found to be correlated to patient’s demographics and characteristics e.g. comorbid conditions [14-16]. As we observed no significant difference in those metrics between our study arms, we assume that the difference in the implant plays a crucial role in patient’s post-surgical recovery and therefore in their discharge destination.

In the light of the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) program, bundled payments will be paid for TKA procedures based on multiple variables in order to improve healthcare costs and treatment efficiency. Previously published studies have revealed great cost variations for different discharge settings and potential savings due to shortened length of stay [17-19]. Utilizing discharge costs analysis as published by Ramos et al we observed a potential average cost reduction when using the customized implant for less patients being discharge to inpatient rehab facilities of $1,100 per patient. Furthermore, our results would potentially save hospitals $1,100 per patients on average from a shortened average length of stay of 1.1 days (LOS of 2.7 days in OTS group and 1.6 days in the customized group). In summary, based on our findings healthcare costs could be potentially cut by approximately $2200 by using the customized compared to OTS implants.

We believe that the customized implant has a positive influence on patient outcomes in a “Fast Track” setting and surgeons and hospitals should consider implant choice as an important factor in fast-track TKA surgery.

References


Restoration of Femoral Condylar Anatomy for Achieving Optimum Functional Expectations: Continuation of an Earlier Study At 5-Year Minimum Follow-Up

Durbhakula S¹, Durbhakula V¹, Durbhakula N¹

Abstract

Background: Studying and reporting the continuous, prospective outcomes of a post-surgical orthopaedic population without loss to follow-up at various standard landmarks over time is rarely achieved in total knee arthroplasty (TKA) literature. Small case series populations reported at an early follow-up time is common, and usually not beyond any initial publication for further reporting. The purpose of this study was to advance the knowledge base of the performance of Freedom Knee system through the continuous monitoring of a previously reported early series TKA patient population.

Methods: A prospective, continuous series of 176 primary posterior stabilized (PS) TKAs were performed in 172 patients by a single surgeon. Femoral component size distribution was assessed and all patients were followed for a minimum of five-years post-operatively. Total Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) scores and range of motion (ROM) was assessed for the entire cohort and by gender.

Results: There were no patients lost to follow-up. Two patients required early post-operative incision and drainage for superficial wound infection of the indicated knees. One patient required tibial component and polyethylene insert revision following a motor vehicle accident resulting in a proximal tibial fracture and component loosening. There was no radiographic evidence of component failure. As expected, femoral component size frequency use was skewed by gender with the larger sizes in males. There were no pre- or post-operative clinical or functional differences by gender and at the recent follow-up (avg. 6.9 years). In addition, there was an average significant increase in change of HSS score (p<0.001) and ROM (P<0.001) when compared to pre-operative baseline but no significant difference in HSS or ROM between the two and five-year outcome results.

Conclusions: The design characteristic for component sizing and functional expectations were re-confirmed in the reported Western population cohort series, and observed optimum safety, performance and efficacy through five-years. Further continued study efforts of this primary TKA system is warranted across multiple surgeons and all ethnic cultures.

Background

Studying and reporting the continuous, prospective outcomes of a post-surgical orthopaedic population without loss to follow-up at various standard landmarks over time is rarely achieved in total knee arthroplasty (TKA) literature. [1,2] Small case series populations reported at an

Keywords: total knee; condylar anatomy
Level of Evidence: AAOS Therapeutic Level III
early follow-up time is common, and usually not beyond any initial publication for further reporting. [3,4] Equally common is reporting the “average time to follow-up” across a large range of time post-operatively. [4,5] There exists a number of well known reasons for discontinuing review of an initial population including lack of interest due to removal of the original component offering, changes in component design, new competitive product offerings, change in surgeon / corporate alliance, and surgical practice growth reducing the ability to track all patients.

Of the few long-term continuous reports, the publication series on the cemented Total Condylar prosthesis (Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ; Howmedica, Rutherford, NJ) spans 20 years, [1,6-8] and the Press-Fit Condylar (DePuy Orthopaedics, Warsaw, IN) has been reported through 25 years. [9] The authors have followed the long-term results of their respective original populations through various post-operative landmarks that yielded multiple intermediate publications. [10-14] In all, these study series have revealed successful “performance and reliability of a surgical procedure”, the long-term durability of the prosthetic composite and has set benchmarks by which other component series are studied and understanding on the longevity and outcome of these devices and patient population.

The design concept and early results of 176 MAXX Freedom Total Knee® system TKA patients, with a minimum follow-up at 2-years, have been previously published. [15] In an effort to advance the knowledge of the prospective results of the Freedom TKA system, the original patient population identified in the previously published study was monitored through their 5-year follow-up landmark. The purpose of this study was to advance the knowledge base of the performance of Freedom Knee system through the continuous monitoring of a previously reported early series TKA patient population.

Materials and Methods

As was previous reported at the two-year post-operative follow-up, between November 2010 and December 2013, the senior author performed 176 consecutive primary TKAs in 172 patients, without selection, utilizing the posterior stabilized (PS) Freedom Total Knee® system (MAXX Orthopedics, Inc., Norristown, Pennsylvania) (Figure 1). [15] The Freedom Total Knee system is manufactured from cast cobalt chromium (ASTM F-75 CoCr-Mo), and the articular bearing surfaces use ram-extruded UHMWPE (GUR 1020). The Freedom Total Knee system was also designed with the intent to address bone conser-
vation while permitting optimal high-flexion motion up to 155 degrees, dependent on the patient’s anatomy and cultural activities of daily living, such as frequent and prolonged squatting and kneeling. To achieve high-flexion, the femoral component was engineered utilizing a multi-radius design in which seven tangential radii were incorporated to accommodate changes in rollback across the available surface through the transition from walking through deep flexion (Figure 2). In addition, development of femoral component sizing was optimized to include the anthropomorphic dimensions of Western and Pan-Asian patient populations.

Of the 172 patients studied, there were 129 females (75.0%) and 43 males (25.0%) with an average patient age at surgery of 69.7 ±7.6 years (range: 52.3 years to 98.6 years). The average age of the female patient (69.3 years) when compared to the male patients (70.7 years) was not significantly different (p=0.311). (Table 1) In this continuous series, four female patients underwent bilateral TKA under the same anesthesia. In this set of patients, the pre-operative diagnosis was predominately degenerative joint disease (DJD) in 170 knees (96.6%) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA) in 6 knees (3.4%). The surgical side was evenly distributed across all patients with 86 left (48.9%) and 90 right (51.1%) knees (Table 1). In all cases the deep-vein thrombosis (DVT) prophylaxis was Lovenox® (Sanofi-Aventis, Bridgewater, NJ).

### Results

All 172 originally studied patients had a post-operative minimum follow-up of 5-years with an average time to follow-up of 6.5 ±0.9 years (range: 5.0 years to 8.1 years). Overall, the pre-operative Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) score was 49.2 ±5.7 (range: 40.0 to 65.0), which significantly improved to a 2-year follow-up average of 88.4 ±3.6 (range: 80.0 to 95.0) (p<0.001) and remained statistically identical a 5-year follow-up average of 88.8 ±3.4 (range: 80.0 to 95.0) (p<0.001 Table 2). As observed with the HSS at 2-years minimum follow-up, there was no statistical difference in pre-operative (p=0.208), 2-years post-operative (p=0.939), 5-years post-operative (p=0.366) or any difference between 2- and 5-years (p=0.505) by gender for HSS.

Functionally, the pre-operative range of motion (ROM) was 113.8 ±6.1 degrees (range: 95 degrees to 125 degrees), which significantly improved at the 2-year minimum follow-up ROM of 128.5 ±4.3 degrees (range: 110 degrees to 140 degrees) to an average 5-year post-operative ROM of 128.7 ±4.1 degrees (range: 115 degrees to 140 degrees). The change in ROM was statistically significant at p<0.001. There was no statistical difference in pre-operative (p=0.566), two-years (p=0.702) or five-years (p=0.913) in ROM by gender. All pre- and post-operative HSS and ROM data is summarized in Table 2. There was no radiographic evidence of aseptic component loosening or osteolysis (Figures 4A - 4C).

As was previously reported, two patients (1.1%) required subsequent incision and drainage surgery for superficial wound infections. Following these procedures both patients went on to successful clinical and functional outcomes through two and five-years post-operatively. No other patient had any subsequent infection through five-years. However, at 4.5-years post-index TKA, one female patient (<1%) with a previously well-functioning, Free-

### Table 1. Patient Demographics – there was no statistical difference in patient age at p = 0.311. Also, there were 172 patients with 176 TKAs (4 bilateral cases).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Patients</td>
<td>172 (100%)</td>
<td>43 (25.0%)</td>
<td>129 (75.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>69.7 ±7.9 years</td>
<td>70.7 ±7.3 years</td>
<td>69.3 ±7.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side</td>
<td>R = 86 (48.9%)</td>
<td>L = 90 (51.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R = 21 (51.2%)</td>
<td>L = 22 (48.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R = 86 (48.1%)</td>
<td>L = 67 (48.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Independent of gender, changes in HSS and ROM from pre- to either post-operative follow-up landmarks were statistically significant (p < 0.001). There was no statistical difference in patient outcomes between genders at any landmark for pre-operative or post-operative HSS or ROM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg Follow-Up</td>
<td>6.5 ±0.9 years</td>
<td>6.3 ±1.1 years</td>
<td>6.7 ±0.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSS Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Operative</td>
<td>49.2 ±5.7</td>
<td>48.3 ±5.6</td>
<td>49.5 ±5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Years Follow-Up</td>
<td>88.4 ±3.6*</td>
<td>88.4 ±3.4*</td>
<td>88.4 ±3.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Years Follow-Up</td>
<td>88.8 ±3.4*#</td>
<td>89.2 ±2.9*#</td>
<td>88.6 ±3.5*#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Motion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Operative</td>
<td>113.8 ±6.1</td>
<td>114.3 ±6.0</td>
<td>113.7 ±6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Years Follow-Up</td>
<td>128.5 ±4.1*</td>
<td>128.3 ±3.8*</td>
<td>128.5 ±4.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Years Follow-Up</td>
<td>128.7 ±4.1*#</td>
<td>128.6 ±3.7*#</td>
<td>128.7 ±4.3*#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant difference from baseline at p < 0.001
# No statistical difference between 2-year and 5-year follow-up results
Dom Total Knee system prosthesis was involved in a motor-vehicle accident (MVA) that resulted in chronic pain and decrease of function involving the left proximal tibia. There was radiographic evidence of a proximal tibial stress fracture and tibial component loosening which were confirmed at the time of tibial component revision. Only the index tibial component and polyethylene insert were removed and a cemented MAXX Freedom® Knee Revision tibial baseplate (MAXX Orthopedics, Inc., Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania) with an extended tibial stem and PS polyethylene tibial insert were implanted without the use of any other adjunctive fixation hardware. The patient recovered without issue and at the most recent follow-up is well functioning without pain or ambulatory deficit.

Discussion

We report on the minimum five-year follow-up of a single surgeon, non-randomized, consecutive case series of patients that received the Freedom Total Knee system for primary TKA. This is the second prospective follow-up report of the original population previously published. [15] The results of this current follow-up show reveal continued optimum TKA performance without patient lost to follow-up, related complications, component failure or deterioration of the prosthetic composite.
Continuous monitoring of total joint arthroplasty devices is of paramount importance including review of new technologies, materials and material combinations, and clinical relevance. Within the current healthcare budgetary climate and increasing healthcare costs, hospital systems are requiring increasing levels of device claims proof prior to approval and use. Currently, while the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the primary regulator of public health safety involving drugs and devices, there is no centralized technology assessment organization for technology and device monitoring. Therefore, various societies and associations have developed multiple voluntary registries that are beginning to yield published observations. [16-18] Unlike the existing international joint arthroplasty registries that are mandatory for all cases performed, voluntary participation in US domestic registries introduces a bias in the devices referenced and data collected. Prospective continuous case series studies can be used to generate information to use for publication, presentation or various hospital Value Added Technology (VAT) committees. The strategic use of large continuous patient study series may yield information that is meaningful for assessing component performance over time. Serial publications of the Total Condylar knee replacement revealed early issues with femoral component sizing, instrumentation and evolving design considerations from the original single pegged cemented patella. [2,10,11,13] These items are of common knowledge today yet were not known upon the early design releases until tried and monitored. Intermediate studies have shown results for component design, patient morphology and surgical technique with and without navigation. [6,14,19-22] Our results have shown favorable restoration of femoral condylar anatomy and restoration of normal knee function through two and five-years in the same study population.

From our patient monitoring efforts with this study we had one patient that required revision of the tibial component following an MVA 4.5 years post-operatively. At the time of revision surgery, use of the MAXX Freedom Knee Revision tibial component was used which allowed for retention of the well-fixed and functioning index primary femoral component. The MAXX Freedom Knee Revision tibial component is engineered to be bone conserving and allows for the use of the available MAXX modular polyethylene inserts independent of femoral component constraint. This avoided the risks that are associated with prolonged surgery that would have most likely occurred with any attempt to remove the well-fixed femoral component and reimplantation of an entire revision TKA system. In addition, the multiple straight or offset stem options are available dependent on the patient’s available tibial anatomy. In this specific case, a stem was required to bypass the proximal tibial fracture. There were no other patients presenting with clinical or radiographic evidence of adverse events or component failure.

As was identified in the earlier publication, this single surgeon, non-randomized consecutive case series had an imbalance of patients by gender (females n=129, males n=43). [15] However, other than femoral component size usage, the measured clinical outcomes were not statistically different when comparing by gender. In this population Lovenox® (Sanofi-Aventis, Bridgewater, NJ, USA) was used in all patients as their DVT prophylaxis, which has been changed to aspirin due to current results in the literature. Also, the patients included were of a Western ancestry population, so no comparative assessments to Middle-Eastern or Pan-Asian populations were available. However, efforts are being made to capture a similar study data across various ancestral populations for comparative review with the currently presented study group.

In conclusion, the reported study of patients receiving the Freedom Total Knee system for primary TKA support the design considerations for anthropomorphic considerations while achieving an increased degree of ROM while minimizing bone resection. The study included a large cohort (n=172) of continuous non-selected series of patients without loss to follow-up for any reason through 5-years. In a cooperative effort between the author and the company, every effort will be made to continue study of this study population through the next follow-up landmark. From these results we believe that continued use and study is warranted to confirm achieving similar results across surgeons and to further study multiple ancestral populations.

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to thank Robert Eberle for his assistance with the preparation of this manuscript.

References


Techniques of Insertion and Early Clinical Impressions with a Short Curved Tissue Sparing Implant for Total Hip Arthroplasty (The French Experience)

Venet G 1, Tesson A 1, Le Cour Grandmaison F 1, Fraquet N 1, Brazil D 2, McTighe T 3

Abstract

Background: Total hip arthroplasty (THA) is one of the most effective orthopedic procedures, providing consistently high success rates across all population segments as measured by pain relief, improved function, and patient satisfaction. However clinical outcomes have been less favorable in young active patients, that lead to the re-development of metal on metal hip resurfacing (HR), with the most successful being the Birmingham Hip Replacement (BHR) introduced in 1997. Evolving complications due to increased metal ion debris has lead to a great reduction of use for all metal on metal (MOM) HR designs, leading many surgeons and patients to look for an alternative surgical selection. This search has focused on the development and use of short stems for THA. One such style of short stems is curved neck preserving designs. This paper will review our French experience with one of those designs.

Materials and Methods: This is a retrospective review of four surgeons series of a short curved tissue sparing cementless femoral implant (TSI™ Hip Stem, Signature Orthopaedics) for THA. The femoral component was used with two different cementless acetabular styles (Mathys RM Pressfit, and Zimmer Biomet Allofit®). Results on the cups will not be revived in this paper. 150 TSI™ Stems by four surgeons at the same institution utilizing the posterior surgical approach since September 2016. 40% women, average age 66 years with extremes of 27 to 78 years. 10 cases of dysplastic hips, 6 cases of aseptic osteonecrosis, 1 fracture, 1 rheumatoid coxitis, and the rest primary coxarthrosis, with 7 patients operated on both hips at the same time. 23.3 % have been Dorr type A canal shape.

Results: There has been no aseptic loosing, three femoral components have been explanted due to postoperative infection. There was one intra-operative femoral distal fracture in a Dorr type A bone profile during stem insertion. One posterior dislocation; there has been two patients with thigh pain with pathological bone scan, and one with low back pain and no leg length discrepancies greater than plus or minus 5 mm.

Conclusion: This short curved tissue sparing implant has demonstrated excellent initial short-term results, with excellent implant stability, excellent medial calcar bone remodeling with one dislocated stem, two thigh pain and one patient with low back pain. One distal intra-operative fracture in a Dorr type A bone. This has now been addressed with the use of distal sizing gauges and the use of flexible reamers to open the distal canal prior to stem insertion. Removal of the infected stems demonstrated implant stability.

Keywords: Tissue Sparing Implant; short curved neck preserving stem; total hip arthroplasty; bone remodeling

Level of Evidence: AAOS Therapeutic Level II
with early bone attachment in the proximal porous surface. The high neck resection allows for ease of revision and conversion implanting a new primary conventional length cementless stem design.

There is a short but definitive learning curve in fitting the implant to the femoral neck versus the standard metaphyseal and diaphyseal conventional style stems.

**Background**

Total hip arthroplasty (THA) is one of the most effective orthopedic procedures, providing consistently high success rates across all population segments as measured by pain relief, improved function, and patient satisfaction. However, clinical outcomes have been less favorable in young active patients, which lead to the re-development of metal on metal hip resurfacing (HR), with the most successful being the Birmingham Hip Replacement (BHR) introduced in 1997. Evolving complications due to increased metal ion debris has lead to a great reduction of use for all metal on metal (MOM) HR designs, leaving many surgeons and patients to look for an alternative surgical selection.

In the past ten years short stems and in particularly neck preserving stem designs have received a significant level of interest at continuing medical education (CME) meetings as a result of the decline of HR.

**Material and Methods**

This is a retrospective review of four surgeons series of a short curved tissue sparing cementless femoral implant (TSI™ Hip Stem, Signature Orthopaedics) for THA. The femoral component was used with two different cementless acetabular styles (Mathys RM Pressfit, and Zimmer Biomet Allofit®). Results on the cups will not be revived in this paper.

150 TSI™ Stems by four surgeons at the same institution utilizing the posterior surgical approach since September 2016. 40% women, average age 66 years with extremes of 27 to 78 years. 10 cases of dysplastic hips, 6 cases of aseptic osteonecrosis, 1 fracture, 1 rheumatoid coxitis, and the rest primary coxarthrosis, with 7 patients operated on both hips at the same time. 23.3 % have been Dorr type A canal shape. Figure 1.

The simple yet novel short curved stem design reduces the need to go lateral into the trochanteric bed where you can increase damage to the musculature and cancellous bone resulting in increased blood loss. Six degrees of femoral neck anteversion is built into the TSI stem with one medial stem curve. Stem length and medial curve allow for more tissue preserving techniques for both soft and proximal femoral canal, to maintain anatomical compressive loading of the retained bone. The stem is manufactured from Ti6Al4V alloy and is proximally coated with titanium plasma spray plus hydroxyapatite (HA) to promote bone attachment. The stem is distally polished and has a sagittal plane cutout to reduce distal hoop tension which has been shown to induce thigh pain. Additionally, the stem has a gentle conical flare at the resection line to reduce subsidence and maintain compressive loads to the medial calcar. A lateral T back design enhances torsional stability reducing chances of aseptic loosening (Figures 2 & 3).
hard tissue without sacrificing implant stability. The inter-

nal proximal conical flair provides for a unique structure to
enhance proximal compressive load transfer to the medial
calcar resulting in less medial calcar resorption.

**Technique Femoral Preparation.** The first step is pre-

operative planning utilizing either plain radiographic tem-
plates or dedicated software. Both femoral neck resection
and resection angle can be predetermined to ensure proper
restoration of joint mechanics and stem position.

Preoperative templating is crucial to select the appro-
priate implant size and optimal neck shaft angle. Prosthetic
templates show the implant in a true A/P projection (ap-
proximately 20 degrees of internal rotation) while radi-
ographs of arthritic hips may or may not represent a true A/P
of the proximal femur and diaphysis because of position-
ing error and/or limited range of motion. If the hip is exter-
nally rotated, a position commonly seen in osteoarthrosis,
the femoral neck appears shorter and more vertical [11,12]
(Figure 4).

Lack of proper offset leads to soft tissue laxity as well
as increased risk of impingement and dislocation. Templa-
ting is challenging even under the most optimal x-ray con-
ditions since the surgeon is using two-dimensional x-rays
to assess a three-dimensional femoral head and neck. In the
osteoarthritic patient the femoral head position tends to be
in external rotation. Traditional radiographs taken with the
foot perpendicular to the cassette underestimate offset due
to the position of the femoral head with respect to the im-
age beam. Studies have demonstrated as much as 7mm can
be underestimated in femoral offset in preoperative tem-
plating, especially in patients whose arthritis fixes the fe-
mur in external rotation [11,12,13] (Figures 5, 6).

The patient is in a decubitus lateral position with bot-
tom and pubic support. The incision (about 8-10cm) is lo-
cated on the greater trochanter’s posterior part, centered at
the top. The acetabular and external rotators approach is
done just next to the greater trochanter and the intra-tro-
chanteric line while dissecting the internal and external ob-
turator muscle and the gastrocnemius muscles. Flexing the

**Figure 4. Radiographic views demonstrating external rotation of 20°, neutral and 20° of internal rotation.**

**Figure 5. A/P X-ray template with femur in 20° of external rotation.**

**Figure 6. A/P Post-operative view with femur in 20° of internal rotation.**

**Figure 7. Illustration showing neck resection zones. Zone B being 510mm as recommendation.**

**Figure 8. Illustration showing medial femoral curve.**

(Courtesy JISRF Archives)
Neck resection angle is important in achieving optimal stem placement and proper biomechanical loading of compressive forces on the medial calcar. The use of a resection guide or trial stem as a cutting template is helpful ensuring the proper angle and level of neck resection (Figure 9). If the neck resection is too vertical the stem can be in valgus, if resection is too horizontal the stem can end up in varus.

Opening the femoral canal can be accomplished by a number of ways dependent on surgeon’s preference. A curved curette, a curved metal sucker, a trocar drill or our preference is the curved canal finder supplied in the set of instruments (Figure 10).

The femoral canal is then rasped with gentle force starting with the starter rasp with progression in sequence to the desired size fitting and filling the femoral neck. A canal sounder can be used to explore the distal size of the femur, and aid in determination of final stem sizing (Figures 11, 12).

A trial reduction can be performed with the rasp in place by using the appropriate trial neck and head or by the use of the trial stem with a modular neck and head (Figures 13, 14, 15).

Trial stem can be extracted and the final definitive stem inserted with gentle force. Over impaction can result in fracturing the femoral neck (Figures 16, 17).

Trial heads can be used on the final definitive stem to determine proper leg length and joint stability (Figures 18, 19).

Note: Neck-sparing stems are at increased risk for mechanical impingement, especially with retained osteophytes attached to the femoral neck. Head neck assessing for boney impingement tested at end flexion with internal rotation as well as at end extension with external rotation.

All impinging osteophytes and excess bone must be removed to maximize hip range without impingement and levering [14]. The use of head sizes of 32mm or greater is recommended. Acetabuli that require a 28 mm head or smaller may be better treated with a dual mobility style cup design.
Results

There have been three femoral components explanted due to postoperative infection (Figure 20). There was one intra-operative femoral distal fracture in a Dorr type A bone profile during stem insertion. There one posterior dislocation; there has been two patients with thigh pain and one associated with low back pain. One patient with purely mechanical pain was very intense initially but diminished with time (1 year post-op). Now she has little discomfort and little functional limitation. At the distal lateral portion of the stem there is a lateral cortical hypertrophy without a real pedestal. This can happen if the distal lateral portion of the stem engages or wedges into the isthmus of the femoral canal. Pain reduces as the distal bone stiffens around the implant. For this reason we aim for a neutral stem position within the canal (Figures 21, 22, 23). Note the medial conical flair is slightly proud of the resection line so there is diminished proximal load transfer as seen with some mild medial bone remodeling. No leg length discrepancies greater than plus or minus 5 mm. [14,15]

When the proximal conical flair is engaged with the medial calcar as seen in Figures 23, 24, and 25 the calcar is loaded in compressive forces and we see positive bone maintenance over the years. This is similar in radiographic results as seen and reported by van der Rijt at the European Hip Society and in 2012 Figure 26 with a similar neck sparing stem with a proximal conical flair. [16]
Conclusion

This short curved tissue sparing implant has demonstrated excellent initial short-term results, with excellent implant stability, excellent medial calcar bone remodeling with one dislocated stem, no aseptic loosening two thigh pain one patient associated with low back pain, one female patient that experienced anterolateral thigh pain at six months post-operatively with diminished pain at one year and one distal intra-operative fracture in a Dorr type A bone. This has now been addressed with the use of distal sizing gauges and the use of flexible reamers to open the distal canal prior to stem insertion. Removal of the infected stems demonstrated implant stability with early bone

Figure 21. Patient A. Preoperative showing a tight distal canal.

Figure 22. Patient A. Post-op demonstrating a tight distal canal fit and a slight gap at the medial conical flair.

Figure 23. Patient A. One year post-op demonstrating medial calcar rounding and distal lateral hypertrophy

Figure 24. Patient B. Post-op Oct. 2016. Conical Flair engaged with medial calcar.

Figure 25. Patient B. December 2019. Demonstrating good maintenance of medial calcar at 3 years post-operatively.

Figure 26. MSA stem postoperative x-rays demonstrating positive bone maintenance of medial calcar (Courtesy of Dr. van der Rijt).
attachment in the proximal porous surface. The high neck resection allows for ease of revision and conversion implanting a new primary conventional length cementless stem design.

There is a short but definitive learning curve in fitting the implant to the femoral neck as compared to implantation of a conventional style cementless stem. The neck resection is a critical part of maintaining positive medial calcar bone remodeling. Overall the authors are optimistic and continuing advocating the use of this neck preserving style stem.

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WHAT IS IRRISEPT?

Irrisept is jet lavage containing low concentration chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG*) 0.05% in sterile water for irrigation.

HOW IRRISEPT WORKS

Irrisept’s bottle design allows users to control the pressure of the solution through manual bottle compression.

The mechanical action of Irrisept helps remove bacteria, particulate and debris in wounds without harming underlying tissues.

Irrisept is sterile packaged, contents include:

- Irrisept, Step 1, 450 mL bottle 0.05% CHG in sterile water, USP (99.95%)
- Irririnse, Step 2, 450 mL bottle, 0.9% sodium chloride, (USP)
- Set of 3 applicators fitting both Irrisept and Irririnse bottles

Irrisept is a FDA-Cleared (K080779), Class II Medical Device
Can We Improve Screening Costs in Asymptomatic Metal on Metal Total Hip Arthroplasties?

Martin JR¹, Otero JE², Springer BD¹, Griffin WL¹

Abstract

Background: Metal on Metal (MoM) total hip arthroplasty (THA) has been largely abandoned in the United States secondary to high failure rates. Many of the failures are attributed to adverse local tissue reactions (ALTR). Therefore, patients that have a MoM THA are routinely screened by checking serum metal ion levels every two years, as was recommended by the FDA. However, there is limited data on the costs of current screening protocols.

Materials and Methods: 318 consecutive patients who underwent a MoM THA at a single institution were retrospectively enrolled. The average follow-up was 8.2 years. Clinical data, metal ion levels, revision and reoperation rates were prospectively collected. The costs of clinical screening for this patient population was calculated and compared to the cost of an annual screening protocol.

Results: 12 patients had either an elevated Co or Cr level (>4.5 ppb). Eight patients were revised secondary to ALTR. The total cost of screening during the study was $612,250. Additionally, if annual screening had been performed, total screening costs would be approximately $1,719,200.

Discussion: Eight patients in the following study were revised secondary to ALTR with a total cost of screening of $612,250. These costs are substantially less than the cost of annual screening ($1,719,200). Due to the considerable costs of screening asymptomatic MoM THA patients, we recommend both optimizing the frequency of screening and evaluating the specific risk of the implant being screened.

Keywords: metal on metal; total hip replacements; screening protocols; cost savings
Level of Evidence: AAOS Therapeutic Level IV
ship in the diagnosis of adverse local tissue reaction [10]. The actual metal ion value that is considered “elevated” varies, and may not directly correlate with adverse local tissue reaction [11,12]. Additionally, the timing for obtaining metal ion levels and the time interval between screenings is not uniform. In the United Kingdom, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) currently recommends annual screening for all patients with a MoM THA with a femoral head 36 mm or larger [13]. However, Kiran et. al. noted that metal ion levels remained stable after seven years and had no significant elevation. Therefore, they suggested that annual screening may not be necessary [12]. Additionally, there is a paucity of data available on the costs of screening this patient population.

Beginning in 2010, we adopted a protocol of monitoring metal ion levels every two years in asymptomatic MoM THA patients. Prior to this, routine screening was not utilized for asymptomatic patients. Revision THA secondary to adverse local tissue reaction has been minimal at our institution; therefore, there remains a substantial cost for screening this asymptomatic patient population. Consequently, the following study was designed to determine the costs of our current surveillance program on asymptomatic MoM THA patients and to compare these with the potential costs of annual screening. Additionally, we sought to determine the cost per patient to identify a single case of an adverse local tissue reaction.

Materials and Methods

After obtaining institutional review board approval, the following study was performed retrospectively. 318 consecutive patients underwent primary THA. All THAs were performed by the senior author, a fellowship trained arthroplasty surgeon, through a posterior approach. A Pinnacle (DePuy; Warsaw, IN) acetabular component with an Ultamet metal liner was utilized in each case. 98% of cases were performed with the S-ROM stem (DePuy; Warsaw, IN) and 2% were performed with an AML stem (DePuy; Warsaw, IN).

Patient Demographics

The patient cohort included 318 patients with 457 MoM THAs identified. The average age at the time of surgery was 55 years (20-78 years). The average time in situ was 8.2 yrs. The median femoral head size was 36 mm and the median cup angle was 40 degrees.

Screening Protocol

Routine monitoring for patients with asymptomatic MoM THA included a physical examination, AP pelvis and lateral radiograph of the involved hip, and cobalt and chromium metal ion levels. However, there was not a standardized time between physical examination/screens. Starting in 2010, patients were routinely screened every two years. The screening period coincided with the widespread availability of cobalt and chromium metal ion labs. Prior to this time, only a few centers had the ability to measure serum/whole blood metal ion levels. Sidaginamale et. al. [15] previously noted that a Co level of 4.5 ppb was highly sensitive and specific for the detection of abnormal wear of a MoM THA. While other cutoff values have been evaluated, we chose 4.5 ppb as a more sensitive screening level. Therefore, any metal ion level over 4.5 ppb was considered elevated by the senior author and the patient was then scheduled to undergo a MARS MRI. Fluid collections suggestive of adverse local tissue reaction in the setting of elevated metal ions were considered to be diagnostic for a failed metal on metal total hip arthroplasty and were subsequently revised. Therefore, we calculated the costs of screening based on 1) actual follow-up, 2) desired follow-up (every 2-years), 3) annual follow-up, and 4) every four-years with the assumption that the same number of ALTR were identified in each screening protocol. A multivariate analysis was performed on our patient population to determine if any patient demographics were associated with an increased risk of ALTR.

Costs of Screening

Costs of screening metal ion levels are not uniform and have changed throughout the duration of the study. The costs as of 2014 were approximately $300, but have decreased to around $124 as of 2018 for one laboratory. It should be noted that screening evaluations will likely continue to become more cost-effective with decreasing lab costs. However, in order to simplify the calculations, the costs of each screening modality are approximated. The table below demonstrates the approximate costs for each exam/test (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam/Test</th>
<th>Cost of Exam (dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Exam/X-rays</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Ion Levels</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARS MRI</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Patients were followed with serial clinical examination, x-rays, and metal ion levels. If an elevated metal ion level was identified, the patient underwent a MARS MRI. All patients that had a positive MRI (large fluid collections, soft tissue masses, etc.) and a clinical examination...
concerning for mechanical symptoms or increasing pain underwent revision for ALTR. The total costs of routine screening as well as MRI evaluation for those with elevated metal ion levels were calculated for this patient population. Additionally, the theoretical screening costs were then calculated utilizing both planned screening as well as annual serial screening protocols. It was assumed that the same number of elevated metal ion levels would be identified as well as the same number of ALTR.

**Results**

We identified 18 elevated cobalt and or chromium levels in 12 patients of the 318 (3.8%). The median cobalt and chromium level on lab draw one was 1.3 ppb and 1.1 ppb and on lab draw 2 was 1.4 ppb and 1.3 ppb, respectively. Of the 12 patients that underwent MARS MRI for elevated metal ion levels, eight patients (2.5%) had confirmed cases of ALTR and were subsequently revised. Of these eight patients, two had groin pain concerning for an ALTR, one patient had radiating low back pain, and the other five patients were minimally symptomatic. The only risk factor associated with ALTR was the time in situ (p=0.0008). Age, gender, cup abduction angle, and femoral head size were not statistically associated with an increased risk of ALTR.

**Total Cost of Current Screening**

The costs for the clinical evaluations and x-rays for this cohort was $316,750. The cost of screening patients with metal ion levels was $271,500. The costs of the MARS MRIs on 12 patients were approximately $24,000. Therefore, the total cost of screening for this study was $612,250 (Table 2). The cost therefore was $1,925 per patient.

**Cost per ALTR**

Eight patients in this study were revised secondary to an ALTR which was confirmed on the pre-operative MARS MRI and intraoperatively. Therefore, our current screening protocol has a cost of $76,531 per ALTR identified.

**Costs of Planned Screening Protocol (every two years)**

Utilizing the planned screening protocol every two years, the cost of clinical exams and x-rays would be $456,750. The cost of screening the entire cohort of patients with metal ion levels would be $391,200. The costs of the MRI evaluations would also be $24,000. The total costs of screening utilizing this protocol would be $871,950, or $2,742 per patient. Additionally, the cost of this theoretical screening protocol would be approximately $108,994 per ALTR (Table 3).

**Costs of Theoretical Screening Protocol (annual)**

Utilizing an annual screening protocol, the cost of clinical exams and x-rays would be $912,800. The cost of screening the entire cohort of patients with metal ion levels would be $782,400. The costs of the MRI evaluations would also be $24,000. The total costs of screening utilizing this protocol would be $1,719,200, or $5,406 per patient. Additionally, the cost of this theoretical screening protocol would be approximately $214,900 per ALTR (Table 4).

**Comparison of Theoretical Screening Protocol (four-years)**

Utilizing a protocol to screen every four-years, the cost of clinical exams and x-rays would be $228,200. The cost of screening the entire cohort of patients with metal ion levels would be $195,600. The costs of the MRI evaluations would also be $24,000. The total costs of screening utilizing this protocol would be $447,800, or $1,408 per patient. Additionally, the cost of this theoretical screening
Current screening protocols for monitoring patients with metal on metal total hip arthroplasties are not uniform [14,16–18]. In the United Kingdom, annual screenings with metal ion levels are required. However, in the United States, starting in 2010 the FDA mandated ion level screening every two years for asymptomatic MoM THA. This mandate is no longer required but is still generally followed. One recent study has demonstrated that metal ion levels appear to remain stable over time and annual metal ion levels are likely not necessary [14]. This led us to re-evaluate our current screening process. There is a substantial cost for screening patients, and more frequent screens will continue to increase costs. However, to our knowledge, no study has evaluated the costs of screening protocols in asymptomatic patients with MoM THA. Therefore, the following study was designed to evaluate theoretical and actual costs of screening this patient population.

Utilizing a less stringent screening protocol than what the MHRA recommends in the UK (screening every year), we identified a total cost of screening for this study of $612,250 over an 8.2 year time period. These screening costs are relatively high. However, these costs are substantially less than what may be observed with annual screening protocols. Our results demonstrate an approximately three-fold increase in the costs of screening utilizing annual protocols. As was previously discussed and demonstrated in our study, metal ion levels appear to remain fairly constant with repeat lab evaluation [14]. It should be noted that the true incidence of ALTR was not known in our study. We have made the assumption that all cases of ALTR were identified with the current screening protocol. While it is intuitive that more frequent screening would lead to increasing costs, it is not certain if more frequent screening will identify more patients with an ALTR. MARS MRI has been noted to identify fluid collections in well-functioning ceramic on polyethylene and metal on polyethylene THAs [19,20]. The two main screening tools for identifying an ALTR (metal ion levels and MARS MRI) do not necessarily confirm the diagnosis of ALTR. Therefore, there does not appear to be a nonsurgical method for defining the true incidence of ALTR.

As was demonstrated in this study, screening asymptomatic MoM THA patients is expensive. Further research is necessary to more accurately define at risk patients for an ALTR. In this study, all patients were implanted with the Pinnacle MoM acetabular component. This implant has been associated with statistically significantly lower metal ion levels than other MoM implant designs [21]. Smith et. al noted the Median Co levels were 2.8 and 3.3 μg/l in the Durom and Birmingham groups, respectively, compared to only 0.52 μg/l in the Pinnacle group (p < 0.001). They also noted that the median Cr levels were 2 and 2.2 μg/l in the Durom and Birmingham groups, respectively, compared to only 1.2 μg/l in the Pinnacle group (p < 0.001). Only eight patients (<3%) had confirmed cases of ALTR in our study. It is possible that implant specific screening may result in increased efficiency of identifying ALTR as well as decreasing the costs of screening. Matharu et. al previously identified implant specific metal ion thresholds for detecting ALTR. This study evaluated the BHR and the Pinnacle modular two piece acetabular component [22]. These implant specific cutoff values were then applied to an external cohort of patients and were once again noted to improve the detection of an ALTR [23]. However, there remains debate as to whether or not there are truly implant specific differences in metal ion levels [23]. Therefore, future screening protocols may place an emphasis on the frequency of screening based on risk stratification [24]. Future screening protocols might include implant design, abduction angle, head size, and symptoms.

It should be noted that screening tests in the medical field are regularly utilized in order to identify conditions with a high morbidity and or mortality such as cancer. Screening tests are commonly highly sensitive and will be associated with few false negative results. However, these
tests may not necessarily be specific and often times require a confirmatory test to rule in or out the disease process. An example of this would be the prostate specific antigen (PSA) which is obtained to screen for prostate cancer. An elevated PSA (>4.0 ng/mL) will require a biopsy to confirm the diagnosis. Ideal screening tests are highly sensitive and have a low cost, and in the case of prostate cancer, the frequency and threshold of screening has been improved over time. Although an ALTR is not cancer, the associated morbidity can be devastating. For this reason, we still advocate screening asymptomatic patients with MoM THA. However, it is important to consider the costs of screening and potentially optimize the screening protocols to maximize sensitivity and decrease costs.

While the data was prospectively collected, the study design was retrospectively performed (retrospectively analyzing metal ions in a prospective cohort of MoM THA patients) and therefore has limitations. First, the screening protocol utilized in this study was not standardized. Serial clinical examinations, radiographs, and metal ion levels are now obtained every two years. During the majority of the study, routine screening protocols were not utilized. There is recent data that shows that serial metal ion levels may not be necessary in this asymptomatic patient population. Second, there are several limitations in the calculation of annual screening costs. It is possible that metal ion levels fluctuate day to day, or with activity, and therefore more frequent screening may increase the number of elevated metal ion levels obtained and potentially more ALTR identified. This has been simplified only to demonstrate the substantial cost differences noted when more frequent screening protocols are utilized. Third, metal ion labs have continued to decrease in costs. In 2014, cobalt and chromium ion levels cost approximately $300, however current costs have dropped to $124. Clearly, the cost-effectiveness of screening asymptomatic patients will improve with decreasing costs of the test. Finally, the true incidence of ALTR is not known for the patient population in this study. Eight patients were revised with confirmed intraoperative ALTR identified. Only 12 patients underwent a MARS MRI and therefore 306 patients were not imaged. It is possible that a subset of these patients may have an ALTR with normal metal ion levels and therefore we note this as a limitation.

## Conclusion

ALTR is a potentially devastating complication associated with MoM THA. Unfortunately, screening protocols are not uniform and rates of ALTR are low. The costs of screening asymptomatic patients in this study were $612,250. Due to the low incidence of ALTR in this patient population (n=8), the cost of screening per ALTR was $76,531. While more frequent screening may potentially increase the identification of ALTR, annual screening was associated with approximately a three-fold increase in the costs. Screening asymptomatic patients with MoM THA is necessary, but an emphasis should be placed on increasing the sensitivity of screening while decreasing the costs.

## Bibliography


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**AUTHOR DISCLOSURES**
The authors declare that there are no disclosures regarding the publication of this paper.

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Charles Bechtol, MD
was internationally known in the fields of biomechanics and orthopedic surgery. His engineering and biomechanical research resulted in the development of numerous joint replacement implants and internal fracture fixation devices – instruments that are familiar to orthopedic surgeons the world over. His innovations included shoulder and knee prostheses, the Bechtol Total Hip system, the Bechtol “fluted” bone screw, and the Bechtol “continuous strength” bone plate.

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What is Considered a Conflict of Interest or What to Disclose in Lectures and Publications?

McTighe T

Recently our Journal was criticized for allowing a co-author to submit and publish a technical paper when said surgeon is involved in a litigation matter. “I am very surprised indeed that you do not consider being a defendant in legal action concerning the very practice being defended in an article amounts to a conflict of interest.”

This made me think it might be an appropriate time to revisit this issue. I think it is important to understand some of the history regarding disclosure and conflict of interest.

What should a conflict of interest policy include when it comes to Continuing Medical Education (CME)? One might think this is an easy question but I have been involved with this question since the 1990s and find that it is one of the more difficult areas of debate. [1]

A policy on conflict of interest (COI) should require those with a conflict (or who think they may have a conflict) to disclose the conflict or potential conflict.

CME in the United States clearly dates back to the formation of the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1873 with publication of its first publication in 1883 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

This issue of COI has been much discussed and debated over the years and the topic of FDA investigation back in 1991 and 1992 resulting in a 1995 publication The Statutory Basis for FDA Regulation of Scientific and Educational Information. [2]

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) intervened in 1992 and was successful in pointing out to the FDA that a governing body was already in place concerning CME activities. However, the FDA did instruct the ACCME that if they changed their guidelines concerning commercial support of CME activities to standards they would basically back off from official involvement. As a result ACCME in 1992 adopted new standards for all ACCME accredited sponsors.

These 1992 standards have been the foundation for many organizations in establishing their own guidelines and standards for educational activities into publications. The ACCME has updated their Standards in 2004, 2005 and more recently in 2014. [3]

1992 ACCME Standards
1. General Responsibilities of Accredited Sponsors – The accredited sponsors are responsible for the content, quality, and scientific integrity of all CME activities certified for credit. Identification of continuing medical education needs, determination of educational objectives, and selection of content, faculty, educational methods and materials is the responsibility of the accredited sponsor. Similarly, evaluation must be designed and performed by the accredited sponsor.

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3. Identifying Products, Reporting on Research and

**Keywords**: conflict of interest; disclosures; lectures; publications
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6. Commercially Supported Social Event – Should not compete with nor take precedence over the educational events.

7. Policy On Disclosure of Faculty and Sponsor Relationships – An accredited sponsor shall have a policy disclosure of the existence of any significant financial interest or other relationship a faculty member or a sponsor has with the manufacturer of any commercial products discussed in an educational presentation.

8. Financial Support for Participants in Educational Activities – In connection with an educational activity offered by an accredited sponsor, the sponsor may not use funds originating from a commercial source to pay travel, lodging, registration fees, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-faculty attendees. Scholarships or other special funding to permit medical Students, residents, or fellows to attend selected educational conferences may be provided as long as the selection of students, residents or fellows who will receive the funds is made either by the academic or training institution or by the accredited sponsor with the full concurrence of the academic or training institution.

Conclusion: There is no question that commercial support can contribute significantly to the quality of CME activities. However, there have been abuses in the past and the ACCME new standards will help to assure scientific integrity of all CME activities that receive certification for credit.

The standards have evolved and I would suggest anyone that publishes and or lectures at CME activities should know the Standards because most lectures that I have observed do not comply with the requirements.

In my opinion, although medical journals have lagged behind ACCME standards with regards to conflict of interest, they have established their own policies on the matter. Almost all medical journals now require authors to disclose COI, however the same standards have not been employed for editors and reviewers. [4]

Haque et al, looked at 703 editors and COI policies at 60 medical journals. 57% of the journals had policies in place governing COI for editors, but only 21% publicly reported the disclosures. [4]

Journals and CME activities have focused on financial conflict of interest (FCOI) but is that sufficient? Certainly there can be other factors that can influence the behavior and actions of persons in a position of authority. A 2004 study, argued that “…the automatic nature of self-interest gives it a primal power to influence judgment and makes it difficult for people to understand its influence on their judgment, let alone eradicate its influence.” [5]

There have been published examples of overtly biased actions by editors. “For example, an orthopedic surgeon, during his tenure as an editor published many studies in his journal favoring products from a company, which paid him millions of dollars in patent royalties.” [6]

What about the potential issues of editors and or reviewers trying to gain favor by approving manuscripts submitted by key surgeons who influence appointments to key memberships in professional societies and committees. I suggest that we have to understand better what motivates behavior and what is the level of trust in a given profes-
In 2007, The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) adopted Standards of Professionalism on Orthopaedic-Industry Conflicts of Interest that require orthopaedic surgeon members to identify and disclose potential conflicts of interest to their patients. [7]

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The procedure outlined below aims to be fair to those making complaints and those complained about. All complaints will be acknowledged (within three working days if by email). If possible a definitive response will be made within two weeks. If this is not possible an interim response will be given within two weeks. Interim responses will be provided until the complaint is finally resolved. If the complainant remains unhappy, complaints should be escalated to the editor, whose decision is final.

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Complaints about editorial content should be made as soon as possible after publication, preferably in writing by email to: editors@ReconstructiveReview.org. Please write your complaint with journal title, vol. no., issue no., paper title, and page no.

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The issue of conflict of interest and what and how to disclose will be an ongoing area of concern and debate for years to come.

The following quote from Phyllis Pettit Nassi clearly states the challenge. “When you talk about trust you have to know the way a group thinks, how they interact, how they communicate, how they educate. You have to know what their roles and relationships are. What are their values? Their practices? What are the expected behaviors?”

Members of JISRF and Reconstructive Review will stay diligent with regard to COI and disclosure issues and from time to time will update our policies and procedures. We welcome comments on this subject and look forward to addressing concerns within a common sense approach.
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References

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AUTHOR DISCLOSURES
The authors declare that there are no disclosures regarding the publication of this paper.

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The specific and primary endeavors are to operate for scientific purposes by conducting medical research of potential improvements in medical surgical methods and materials for preserving and restoring the functions of the human body joints and associated structures which are threatened or impaired by defects, lesions or diseases.

This Journal as all activities conducted by JISRF are available to all interested surgeons, scientists and educators. Our focus is on new cutting edge technologies, science – all with the intent to raise the level of discussion and discovery. Please become a part of this endeavor, we look forward to your interest and participation.

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Levels of Evidence

Reconstructive Review has adopted the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) Levels of Evidence for Primary Research Question. These guidelines will now be part of the review process for manuscript submission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Evidence</th>
<th>Types of Studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Therapeutic Studies – Investigating the results of treatment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prognostic Studies – Investigating the effect of a patient characteristic on the outcome of disease</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>• High quality randomized trial with statistically significant difference or no statistically significant difference but narrow confidence intervals • Systematic review of Level I RCTs (and study results were homogenous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>• Lesser quality RCT (e.g. &lt;80% follow-up, no blinding, or improper randomization) • Prospective comparative study • Systematic review of Level II studies or Level I studies with inconsistent results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>• Case control study • Retrospective comparative study • Systematic review of Level III studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>Case Series8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A complete assessment of quality of individual studies requires critical appraisal of all aspects of the study design.
2. A combination of results from two or more prior studies.
3. Studies provided consistent results.
4. Study was started before the first patient enrolled.
5. Patients treated one way (e.g. cemented hip arthroplasty) compared with a group of patients treated in another way (e.g. uncemented hip arthroplasty) at the same institution.
6. The study was started after the first patient enrolled.
7. Patients identified for the study based on their outcome, called “cases”; e.g. failed total arthroplasty, are compared to those who did not have outcome, called “controls”; e.g. successful total hip arthroplasty.
8. Patients treated one way with no comparison group of patients treated in another way.
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