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Surgical outcome of patients with meningomyelocele treated with a team approach

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Abstract

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Meningomyelocele is the most common congenital anomaly of the central nerves system. It is not only a spinal cord anomaly; associated hindbrain abnormalities, hydrocephalus, bladder, and bowel disturbance, and orthopedic deformities make a team effort necessary. We reviewed our patients with meningomyelocele treated in this way and evaluated their early and long-term outcomes. We included 95 patients with meningomyelocele operated on between 1990 and 2004 in this study. The medical records were reviewed from the aspects of neurologic and physical findings, surgery performed, and complications. Parental age and education were analyzed when available. The χ^2 test was used for the statistical analyses. There were 41 boys (43.1%) and 54 girls (56.9%). The lumbar region was the site of the meningomyelocele in 57 patients (60%). Patients with cervical and sacral meningomyelocele had a higher rate of normal motor function than those with meningomyelocele at other levels ($P=0.0001$). We also noted that the higher the location of meningomyelocele, the greater the control of both sphincters ($P=0.0013$). In conclusion, the management of children with meningomyelocele needs a team approach. The majority of patients can have a normal IQ and a socially acceptable degree of continence and be able to walk. The patients should be treated with aggressive therapies whenever possible. © 2006 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Inc.

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