Assessment of Mandibular Function using Mandibular Function Impairment Questionnaire after Closed Treatment of Unilateral Mandibular Condyle Fractures

Sudheesh KM¹, Rajendra Desai², Siva Bharani K S N³, Nandini Katta⁴

1-Assistant Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, College of dental sciences, Davangere, Karnataka, India. 2-Senior professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, College of dental sciences, Davangere, Karnataka, India. 3-Professor and Head, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, College of Dental Sciences, Davangere, Karnataka, India. 4-Assistant Professor, Department of paediatric and preventive dentistry, College of dental sciences, Davangere, Karnataka, India.

Correspondence to:
Dr. Sudheesh KM, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Room no 2, College of Dental Sciences, Davangere, Karnataka, India.
Contact Us: www.ijohtm.com

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common maxillofacial fractures are mandibular fractures (57%).¹ 18.5-57% of all mandibular fractures are fractures of the mandibular condyle.²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶

Treatment of mandibular condyle fracture is decided based on clinical as well as radiological evidence for the presence of the fracture, extent of the injury, fracture level, degree of displacement or dislocation, presence of any additional facial fracture, dental malocclusion and mandibular dysfunction, posterior occlusal support, clinical expertise of the surgeon and sometimes based on willingness of the patient to undergo surgery.⁴,⁶,⁷

Closed treatment is recommended many times to avoid problems associated with surgical approach such as infection, nerve injury, blood vessel injury, and scar formation.⁸,⁹,¹⁰ Complications associated with condylar fracture and its treatment are malocclusion, loss of ramus height, ankylosis, chronic pain, creptation anterior open bite, joint pain reduced mandibular function, hypomobility, deviation on mouth opening, and facial nerve injury.⁴,⁶,⁷

Choosing the best treatment for a single patient requires careful consideration of the fracture type and patient characteristics.⁴,⁶,⁷

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the outcome of closed treatment of unilateral condylar fractures based on patient complaints using a questionnaire.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Patients with unilateral condylar fractures treated by nonsurgical method in the department of Oral and maxillofacial surgery, college of dental sciences, from the year 2011 were selected for the study. The study was done between 2011 and 2014. Personal details of these patients including name, age, sex, address, telephone numbers and fracture sites were obtained from the patient admission register of department of oral and maxillofacial surgery. They were contacted on telephone, explained about the study and invited to the department of oral and maxillofacial surgery if they were willing to participate in the study. Participants were recalled at 6 months and 12 months follow up. All participants were given a covering letter including information such as the department behind the study, name and address of the researcher, details of the method and why the respondent was selected, the aims of the study, any potential harm or benefits by participating in the study, and what will happen to the information. Informed consent was obtained from all patients.

The patients were requested to fill out the mandibular function impairment Questionnaire (MFIQ). The MFIQ is designed to assess the patient’s perception of mandibular function impairment after closed treatment of unilateral mandibular condyle fractures.

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function impairment. It has 17 items and each item is presented with a 5 point Lickert scale. On this scale the patient can indicate how much difficulty was experienced while performing a particular mandibular movement or task. The scores of the Lickert scale are: 0 = no difficulty, 1 = a little difficulty, 3 = much difficulty, 4 = very difficult or impossible without help. The MFIQ also consists of a scoring range from 0 to 68, where 0 indicates no mandibular function impairment. Using these scores a Raw Component Score is calculated and a functional impairment rating scale (FIRS) is derived (0-5). An FIRS = 0 or 1 indicates low level of function impairment, FIRS = 2 or 3 indicates moderate level of function impairment and FIRS = 4 or 5 indicates severe level of function impairment (Table1 And Table 2).\(^{12}\)

Ethical clearance was obtained from College of Dental Sciences, Davangere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No difficulty</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little difficulty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit of difficulty</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much difficulty</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult or impossible without help</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Scoring Key

Qualitative Function Impairment Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRS = 0 or 1</th>
<th>Low</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRS = 2 or 3</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRS = 4 or 5</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Qualitative Level of Function Impairment

RESULTS

35 patients with unilateral condylar fractures were treated nonsurgically from 2011 to 2014. 30 patients participated in the study. Three patients were contacted on telephone as they were discharged from the hospital after treatment. The other patients were informed directly about the study during their hospital stay. 2 patients were not present for the 12 months follow up. For these patients the values at 6 months were carried forward.

Graph 1 shows the MFIQ scores recorded at 6 months and 12 months postoperatively.

In the current study, at 6 months postoperatively 19 patients (63.3%) had MFIQ score (FIRS) < 1 and 11 patients (36.7%) had MFIQ score (FIRS) =1. At 12 months postoperatively out of 30 patients 29 (96.7%) had MFIQ score (FIRS) < 1 and 1 (3.3%) had MFIQ score (FIRS) =1. No patient had MFIQ score more than 1.

DISCUSSION

Though great consensus is available for nonsurgical approach to condylar fractures in children, condylar fracture treatment in adults is still a highly debated issue. Most surgeons seem to favor nonsurgical treatment of condylar fractures.\(^{13}\) The MFIQ appears to be a reliable and valuable complementary tool to assess mandibular function. The authors used the MFIQ to assess mandibular function in patients with TMJ osteoarthrosis and internal derangement.\(^{12}\) In another study MFIQ was used to assess the functional outcome related to oral and oropharyngeal cancer.\(^{14}\) In the present study MFIQ was used to assess the function of mandible after closed treatment of condylar fractures.

In a prospective cohort study by Niezen ET et al, the MFIQ was used to assess the function of mandible and the patient complaints were assessed during physical examination. A logistic regression analysis was done and MFIQ scores more than zero was considered as a dependent variable. The mean (SD) MFIQ score was 3.4 points (7.3). This score was the mean of all the scores for each question in the questionnaire. The predictors of mandibular function impairment were increased age, pain, moderate or poor perceived occlusion, absolute difference between left lateral movement and right lateral movement of the mandible and reduction in mouth opening.\(^{15}\)

In a randomized control trial, the mean MFIQ score in the closed treatment group was 10.5 points (SD 12.1) and in the open reduction group 2.5 points (SD 4.6).\(^{16}\) A reason for such relatively large difference in the results between the two studies may be because the authors centre in the prospective cohort study may have been more focused on closed treatment procedures and the centers participating in RCT more focused on open reduction.

In the current study, at 6 months postoperatively out of 30 patients 63.3% had MFIQ score (FIRS) < 1 and 36.7% had MFIQ score (FIRS)=1. At 12 months postoperatively 96.7% had MFIQ score (FIRS) < 1 and 3.3% had MFIQ score (FIRS)=1. Patients experienced a low level of functional impairment at 6 months and 12 months postoperatively after closed treatment of condylar fracture. For efficient and maximal functioning of the masticatory system, a craniomandibular articulation is necessary. Whether or not it must be in the form of a ginglymoarthrodial joint or whether a simple hinge joint is adequate is unclear. It is also unclear whether a more effective tempromandibular articulation is provided by open treatment than closed treatment. One must weigh the risk of open surgery against the possible improvement in outcomes. Not just surgical risks, but biological risks...
such as the disruption of the blood supply to the condyle can also lead to resorption/remodeling as well. Lindahl and Hollender radiographically demonstrated the ability of a new condylar process to regenerate after closed treatment of condylar process fractures. They showed that individuals who were young at the time of injury almost completely regenerate a new condylar process. This adaptation is called “restitutional” remodeling, which indicates that a completely new condylar process of normal morphology is re-created. However, as the age advances, the condylar process has less robust remodeling ability at the time of injury and the regenerated condylar process has atypical morphology, even years later. This is called “functional” remodeling, indicating that the condylar process looks abnormal even though it might function very well. Hjorth et al similarly showed that most of the muscles in patients treated for condylar process fractures tend to get normalized with time, although some asymmetry of the maseter muscles occurred even after up to 1 year.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that a low level of mandibular function impairment exists after closed treatment of unilateral mandibular condylar fractures based on patient complaints. If the risks of surgery outweigh the benefits of mandible, then a conservative approach should be chosen because over a period of time neuromuscular, skeletal and dental adaptations occur. Patients get adapted to these changes avoiding a need for surgery. But the indications and contraindications of open reduction and internal fixation should always be considered before treating every case. More studies of assessment of mandibular function using MFIQ comparing open and closed treatments are required to consider “patient complaints” as an individual assessment tool for evaluating outcome of non surgical treatment of condylar fractures.

REFERENCES

17. Treatment of Mandibular Condylar Process Fractures: Biological Considerations Edward Ellis III, DDS, MS* and Gaylord S. Throckmorton, PhD† J Oral Maxillofac Surg 63:115-134, 2005