

Research evaluates treatment options for pelvic organ prolapse

12 January 2017

Pelvic organ prolapse occurs when the pelvic organs drop from their normal position in the pelvis. This can have a negative impact on a woman's overall functioning and quality of life. Two of the most common treatments are surgery or pessary, which is a removable device that helps provide support to the pelvic organs. While both surgery and pessary can improve prolapse symptoms, questions remain about patients' functional outcomes and goal attainment between the two forms of treatment.

Research on this topic has been published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*. The research was conducted by Vivian W. Sung, MD, FACOG; Kyle J. Wohlrab, MD, FACOG; and Annetta Madsen, MD (fellow) of the Division of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, a Care New England Hospital, and The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, as well as Christina Raker, ScD, of the Division of Research at Women & Infants Hospital and the Alpert Medical School.

The researchers found that while [women](#) undergoing [surgery](#) or having a pessary achieve their [goals](#) and have improvements in physical, social and emotional functioning, those who underwent surgery experienced greater improvements.

"When choosing between surgery or pessary, many women have questions about long-term expectations," explained Dr. Sung. "While we already know that both surgery and pessary can improve symptoms of [pelvic organ prolapse](#), we wanted to be able to provide women with more information comparing outcomes that matter to them, such as whether they are likely to achieve their prolapse, bladder and bowel symptom goals, as well as physical, social, emotional and sexual functioning goals."

A total of 160 women were enrolled in the study and followed for up to 12 months, including 72 surgical and 64 pessary patients.

Dr. Sung and her team concluded, "At follow-up, a higher proportion of women in the surgery group reported successfully achieving symptom goals and function goals compared with women who chose pessary." However, the team also acknowledged that not all women desire surgical treatment and women who continued with pessary also experienced improvements in symptoms.

More information: Vivian W. Sung et al. Patient-reported goal attainment and comprehensive functioning outcomes after surgery compared with pessary for pelvic organ prolapse, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajog.2016.06.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2016.06.013)

Provided by Care New England

APA citation: Research evaluates treatment options for pelvic organ prolapse (2017, January 12)
retrieved 27 April 2021 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-01-treatment-options-pelvic-prolapse.html>

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