

## TWO PORTS VERSUS THREE PORTS IN TOTALLY EXTRAPERITONEAL INGUINAL HERNIA REPAIR USING 3DMAX™ MESH

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** to compare laparoscopic two-port completely extraperitoneal (TEP) inguinal hernia repair to the traditional three-port method in order to assess the long-term results, safety, and feasibility of the procedure. **Methods:** A two-year prospective analysis was conducted at Theodor Bilharz Research Institute hospital between 2021 and 2023, comparing 35 patients who had two-port TEP to 35 patients who underwent traditional three-port TEP. **Results:** 33 patients underwent two-port TEP repairing 35 hernias, while 34 patients underwent 3 ports TEP repairing 35 hernias. 30 (85.7%) patients in group A and 32 (91.4%) in group B were male. Mean age  $\pm$  SD was  $42 \pm 15$  years in group A vs.  $38 \pm 19$  years in group B. Mean body mass index  $\pm$  SD was  $38.0 \pm 7.7$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> in group A vs.  $35.0 \pm 8.1$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> in group B. Indications for surgery included primary repair 33 (94.2%) in group A vs. 34 (97.1%) in group B, recurrence from open repair 1 (2.9 %) in each group, and incarcerated inguinal hernia 1 (2.9 %) in group A. 33 (94.4 %) cases in group A and 34 (97.1) cases in group B were unilateral. Operative time  $\pm$  SD was  $48.2 \pm 19.9$  min in group A vs.  $43.7 \pm 17.9$  min in group B for unilateral repair and  $69.4 \pm 31.6$  min in group A vs.  $65.2 \pm 29.8$  min in group B for bilateral repair. Two-port TEP was successful in 33 (94.2 %). single (2.9 %) case required the addition of a third port in group A. single (2.9 %) cases were converted to TAPP repair in group A. Mean follow-up time  $\pm$  SD was  $9.4 \pm 3.7$  months. Postoperative complications included seroma 2 (5.7%) cases in group A and 1 (2.9 %) case in group B, hematoma 1 (2.9 %) in group A, chronic inguinal pain 2 (5.7%) cases in group A and 1 (2.9 %) case in group B. single (2.9 %) hernia recurred in group A. **Conclusion:** With applying big 3DMax™ Mesh, two-port TEP appears to be a practical, safe, and effective procedure for laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair. It should be regarded as a viable, less invasive alternative to traditional three-port techniques.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inguinal hernia repair is one of the most common elective procedures performed for adults and children in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, despite notable population variations [1]. Although inguinal hernias account for over 70% of abdominal wall defects, the lifetime risk for these conditions is 3% for women and 27% for men [2].

Single-incision procedures are being tested for both the transabdominal preperitoneal (TAPP) and total extraperitoneal (TEP) methods to laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair because of a trend towards the use of lesser and narrower ports [3-9]. These difficulties might have prevented single-incision laparoscopic surgery (SILS) from being widely applied in laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair. Some of the drawbacks of single-incision laparoscopic surgery (SILS) include the intense learning curve, the difficult ergonomics of the equipment, and the reported increase in port-site herniation during single-incision laparoscopic surgery (SILS) [10-12].

Since 1997, a modified TEP inguinal hernia repair using two ports instead of three has been performed. This approach follows the current trend of minimizing invasiveness without considering the challenges associated with SILS. In this study, we will talk about the TBRI experience in terms of minimizing the number of ports utilized during TEP inguinal hernia repair. In this study, two groups underwent surgery: one with two ports and the other with three ports. Operative times, complications, post-operative pain, and the need for analgesics were compared between the two groups.

## 2. METHODS

This study was a prospective randomized controlled trial including 70 patients candidate for laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair either unilateral or bilateral. This study was done in Theodor Bilharz Research Institute between 2021 to 2023. Laparoscopic TEP was offered as first-line treatment for all patients over the study duration. Patients deemed a poor candidate for laparoscopic repair were offered an open approach. Patients who underwent open repair were not included in the study's analysis. All patients were consented for the possibility of additional port placement and conversion to TAPP approach or open repair. Patients were divided into 2 groups:

**Group A:** 35 patients underwent laparoscopic two ports TEP inguinal hernia repair.

**Group B:** 35 patients underwent classic 3 ports laparoscopic TEP inguinal hernia repair.

### Inclusion Criteria

- Male patient from 18 to 70 years old with inguinal hernia either unilateral or bilateral.
- Recurrent hernia post open inguinal hernia repair.

### Exclusion Criteria

- Patients with inguino-scrotal hernia.
- Previous lower abdominal surgery.

All patients underwent detailed medical history, clinical examination, routine hematological and biochemical investigations. The day of operation, patients were admitted to the hospital. All procedures were operated under general anesthesia.

In every case, a two-port repair was attempted. Patient demographics at the time of surgery, surgical indications, hernia side and type, operative times, estimated blood loss (EBL), significant intraoperative complications such as bowel, bladder, vascular, or nerve injury, and time spent recovering before discharge were examined in the surgical reports. The day of the operation saw the discharge of all patients. The emergence of postoperative complications such as seroma, hematoma, surgical site infection, chronic inguinal discomfort lasting more than 3 months, and hernia recurrence were all looked for in both electronic and paper medical records.

### **Two-Port Technique**

The technique was a variation of the first protocol outlined by McKernan and Laws in 1993, and urinary catheters were not utilized in any of the cases [15]. Patients were instructed to void before entering the operating room.

After general anaesthesia was given, all port sites were anaesthetized with 0.5% bupivacaine with epinephrine to aid in intraoperative hemostasis and postoperative analgesia. A transverse incision of 10 mm was made just below the umbilicus. Next, blunt dissection was used to expose the anterior rectus sheath on the side of the hernia that required treatment. The rectus muscle fibres beneath were retracted using lateral "S"-retractors after a sharp 10 mm incision. Blunt dissection was carried out with a 10 mm zero-degree laparoscope, initially in the vicinity of the midline and then laterally. A pneumoperitoneum large enough was produced by inflating carbon dioxide at a pressure of 15 millibars. A second trocar, measuring 5 mm, was placed via the vertical midline (Fig.1). Using an atraumatic grasper and a blunt probe, the cord was dissected to skeletonize and precisely identify all chord components (Fig.2 and fig. 3).

After the hernia sac was reduced (Fig. 3), the hernia defect, including the direct and indirect gaps, was covered with a sizable Bard 3DMax™ (10.8 cm\*16.0 cm) Polypropylene mesh (Fig. 4). The 3DMax™ Mesh was developed based on careful and precise anatomical research of the inguinal canal. The three-dimensional, anatomically curved shape, sealed edge and medial orientation marker allow for easier positioning than a conventional flat mesh and also enhance the speed and simplicity of placement. Prior to the advent of mesh, the second hernia sac in cases of bilateral hernias was reduced. After that, CapSure™ were used to attach the mesh to Cooper's ligament and the anterior abdominal wall (Fig. 5). The mesh was visualized to preserve proper alignment while the pneumoperitoneum descended. A 2-0 vicryl high dermal stitch was used to seal the skin at both port sites, and a 2/0 vicryl suture was used to cover the 10 mm trocar site in the fascial layer (Fig. 6). The wounds were then dressed with betadine and Steri-Strips (3 M, Minneapolis, MN). On the day of the procedure, patients were sent home. Patients were seen as needed and for a follow-up visit within two weeks.

### **Three-Port Technique**

A third 5 mm trocar was inserted in the midline between the other 2 ports followed by all steps done in 2 ports technique.

All patients were evaluated Post operatively by the surgical team after 1 week, 2 weeks and 3 months after surgery. Complications were recorded in clinical charts. All infections, Seroma, pain, recurrences and their treatments were evaluated.



Figure 1: Positions of Two Ports.

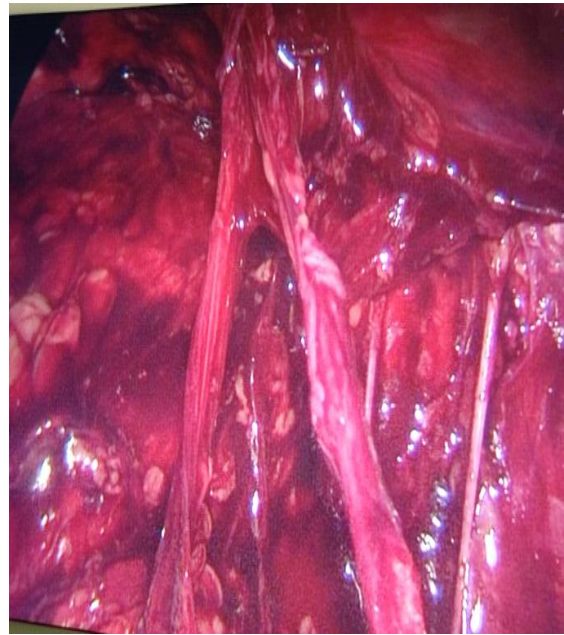


Figure 2: Dissection of the Sac, Triangle of Dome.

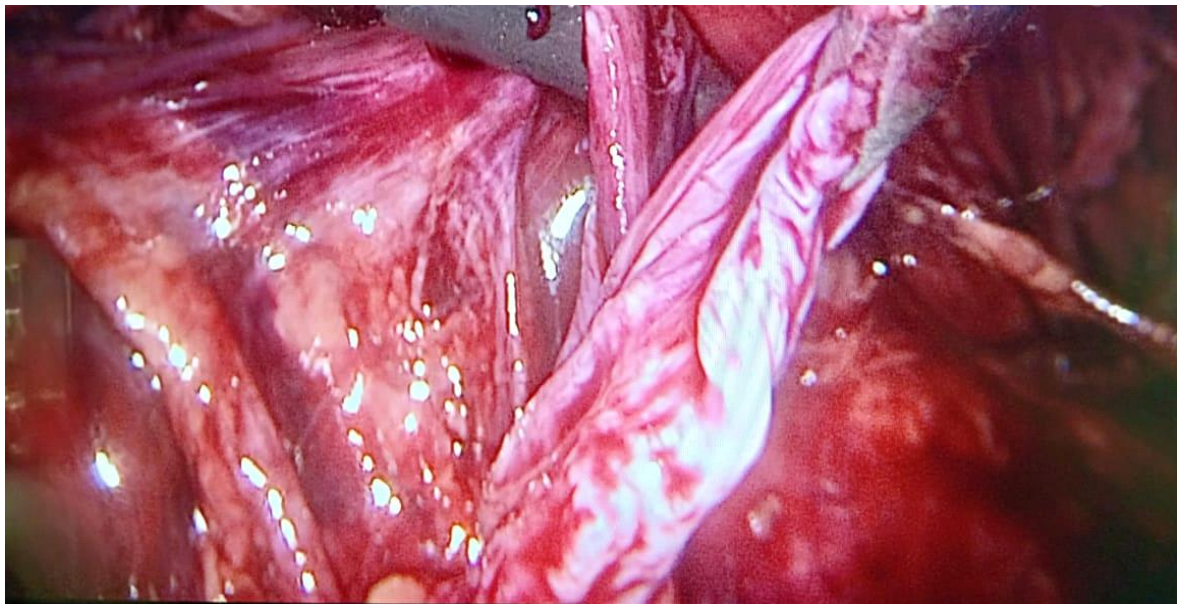


Figure 3: Sac after Dissection



Figure 4: large right side Bard 3DMax™

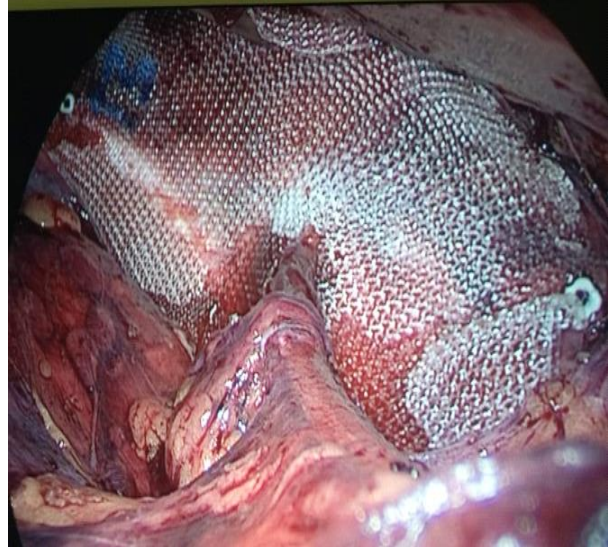


Figure 5: Placement of the mesh.

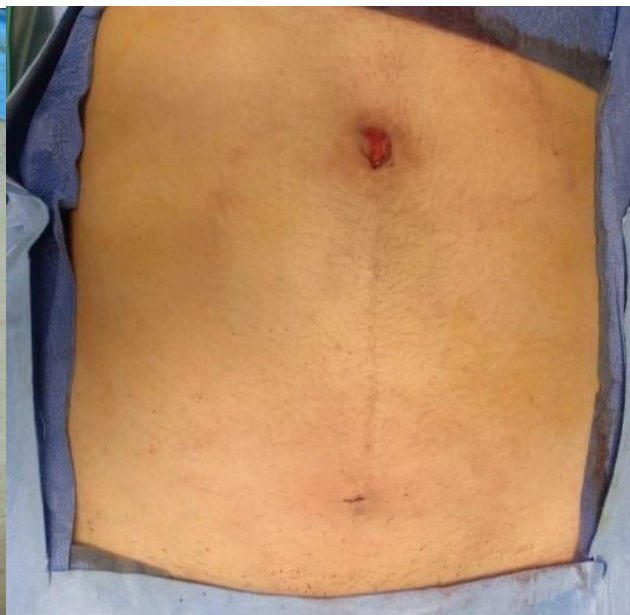
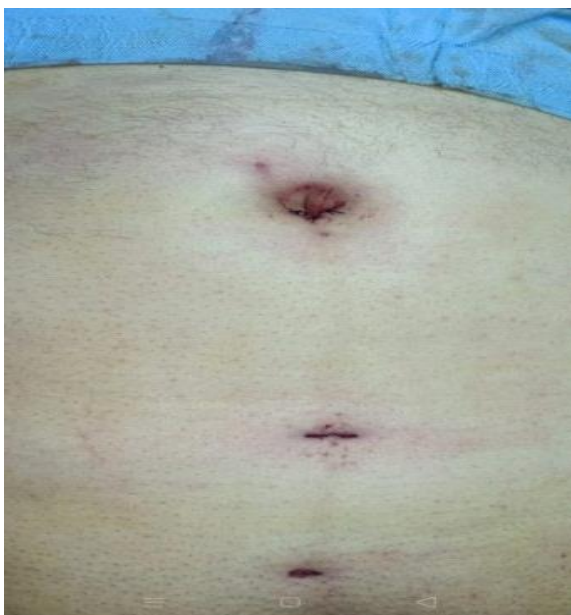


Figure 6: The Operative Wounds; 2 ports vs. 3ports

### 3. RESULTS

Patient demographics and hernia characteristics are summarized in Table 1. Mean age  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD) was  $42 \pm 15$  years in group A while group B was  $38 \pm 19$ . Mean body mass index  $\pm$  SD was  $38.0 \pm 7.7$  kg/m<sup>2</sup> in group A while group B was  $35.0 \pm 8.1$ . 30 (85.7 %) patients were males and 5 (14.2 %) were females in group A, while 32 (91.4%) patients were males, 3 (8.6%) patients were females in group B. All operations were performed on an elective basis. 33 (94.2%) cases in group A and 34 (97.1%) in group B were for primary repair, 1 (2.9 %) patient in each group were performed for hernia recurrence following open repair, and single patient in group A (2.9 %) were incarcerated at the time of presentation. No patients had evidence of strangulation during preoperative examination. 19 hernias (54.3 %) in group A and 23 (65.7 %) hernias in group B were found on the right. 2 hernias

(5.7 %) in group A and single (2.9 %) hernia in group B were found bilateral. Operative data are summarized in Table 2. Operative time was defined as time from skin incision to closure.

**Table 1: Patient Demographics and Hernia Characteristics**

Variable	Group A	Group B	P value
Age ± SD (years)	42 ± 15	38 ± 19	0.278
BMI ± SD (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	38.0 ± 7.7	35.0 ± 8.1	0.491
sex			
• Male	30 (85.7%)	32 (91.4%)	0.452
• Female	5 (14.3%)	3 (8.6%)	
Indication for surgery			
• Primary repair	33 (94.2%)	34 (97.1%)	0.602
• Recurrent	1 (2.9 %)	1 (2.9 %)	
• Incarcerated	1 (2.9 %)	0	
Hernia side			
• Right	19 (54.3 %)	23 (65.7 %)	0.584
• Left	14 (40 %)	11 (31.4 %)	
• Bilateral	2 (5.7 %)	1 (2.9 %)	

Mean operative time ± SD for unilateral repair was 48.2 ± 19.9 min in group A, 43.7 ± 17.9 min in group B. Mean operative time ± SD for bilateral repair was 69.4 ± 31.6 min in group A, 65.2 ± 29.8 min in group B. 30 (85.7 %) in group A cases and 28 (80 %) cases in group B were found to have indirect defects, 5 (14.3 %) cases in group A and 6 (17.1 %) cases in group B had direct defects. Single cases in group B (2.9 %) had components of both direct and indirect. Single operation (2.9 %) in group A required the addition of a third port to reduce the hernias. Single operations (2.9 %) in each group were converted to TAPP repair, as the peritoneum was breached with large defect. None of the 70 cases had major intraoperative complications including significant bleeding, bowel, bladder, vascular, or nerve injury. Mean EBL ± SD for unilateral repair was 4 ± 2.5ml in group A, 3 ± 1.5ml in group B. Mean EBL ± SD for bilateral repair was 5 ± 3.5ml in group A, 4 ± 2ml in group B.

Postoperative complications and follow-up time are displayed in Table 3. All electronic and paper records were reviewed to evaluate rates of complications and hernia recurrences. Mean ± SD follow-up time for the study was 9.4 ± 3.7 months. 8 (11.4 %) of patients experienced some form of postoperative complication. single (2.9 %) patient in group A developed hematoma that resolved by conservative treatment. Two (5.7%) patients in group A and 1 (2.9 %) in group B developed postoperative sermoa that resolved spontaneously. 2 (5.7%) patients in group A and single patient (2.9 %) in group B suffered from chronic pain related to the mesh which improved after 3 months, None of these patients required explanation of mesh. Hernia recurrence was noticed in single patient (2.9 %) in group A while no recurrence was noticed in group B where this patient undergo open repair after laparoscopic exploration to identify the recurrence as this patient was a female patient with right sided hernia canal of Nuck(**Fig.6**), No patients experienced port-site herniation.

**Table 2: Operative data**

Variable	Group A	Group B	P value
Operative time (mins)			
• Unilateral ± SD	48.2 ± 19.9	43.7 ± 17.9	0.896
• Bilateral ± SD	69.4 ± 31.6	65.2 ± 29.8	
Estimated blood loss (ml)			
• Unilateral ± SD	4 ± 2.5	3 ± 1.5	0.949
• Bilateral ± SD	5 ± 3.5	4 ± 2	
Hernia defect			
• Indirect	30 (85.7 %)	28 (80 %)	0.559
• Direct	5 (14.3 %)	6 (17.1 %)	
• Direct and indirect	0	1 (2.9 %)	
Intraoperative complications			
• Port addition	1 (2.9 %)	0	0.386
• Conversion to TAPP repair	1 (2.9 %)	1 (2.9 %)	
The patient satisfaction score ± SD	8 ± 1.6	6 ± 1.2	0.097
Pain score ± SD	5.3 ± 1.8	6.1 ± 2.1	0.645

**Table 3: Postoperative Complications**

Variable	Group A	Group B	P value
Hematoma	1 (2.9 %)	0	0.926
Seroma	2 (5.7%)	1 (2.9 %)	
Surgical site infection	0	0	
Chronic pain	2 (5.7%)	1 (2.9 %)	
Hernia recurrence	1 (2.9 %)	0	



**Figure 7: Recurrent Case after 2 Ports**

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In this work, we examined the viability, security, and efficiency of two-port TEP repair. We discovered that 94.4% of cases undergoing laparoscopic TEP were successfully finished utilizing the modified two-port method in 97.1% of cases. The two-port operation may be theoretically feasible, according to this. One case employing the TAPP method was successfully done laparoscopically out of another single case requiring further port installation. Therefore, when adjusting for cases where laparoscopic repair was possible, with two-port TEP, the success rate is marginally greater at 94.0 %. We are aware that reducing the number of working ports in any operation may become more difficult to perform adequate dissection resulting in increased operative times. Therefore, in addition to measuring the rate of success of this technique, we also compared the operative times in our patient population to those presented in two recent Meta analyses of conventional TEP [13, 15]. Our group A mean operational times of 48.2 minutes for unilateral repair and 69.4 minutes for bilateral repair match favourably to the 50–80 minute range that other researchers employing three ports reported [12, 14]. It is evident from our comparable operation durations that the surgeons' ability to execute TEP effectively is unaffected by employing one fewer port. Using fewer ports comes with a notable learning curve. If the case is difficult with only two ports, placing an additional trocar just a few centimeters below the second port in the midline is always an option. Moreover, the two-port technique described does not use any other specialized instrumentation. With 94 % of cases successfully performed with the two-port method and operative times well under what is currently reported on conventional TEP, These findings demonstrate the viability of two-port TEP for the management of inguinal hernias. We also examined safety and rates of postoperative complications. 11.4 % of patients developed some form of postoperative complication during a mean follow-up time of greater than 6 months. A tiny percentage of patients had persistent inguinal pain that persisted for longer than three months. The large majority of consequences were mild, such as seroma and hematoma. We postulated that the pain could be secondary to tacker fixation or mesh installation, as has been indicated by others, even though the precise aetiology of chronic pain after hernia surgery is still unknown [16–18]. Fortunately the postoperative problems were comparable to the earlier reports of conventional TEP, indicating that the two-port procedure is just as safe as the three-port technique [13, 15]. There are limitations inherent in this prospective analysis. The long-term clinical follow-up in this trial, which would have included a survey about chronic postoperative pain, was not carried out. Even yet, removing a port decreases the possibility of surgical site infections, herniations at the port, and unintentional damage to important surrounding structures when trocars are inserted. However, as these are relatively uncommon events in conventional repair, further and larger studies would be needed to determine to what degree using one less port would reduce the incidence of these complications. Additionally, this study made no attempt to investigate whether the two-port technique is practical for surgeons who choose not to use a balloon dissector or whether the technique led to reduced overall costs, decreased pain after surgery, increased patient satisfaction, and a quicker return to normal activities. We are aware that the method produces better cosmeses and one fewer scar, nevertheless. Lastly, we examined the efficacy of the procedure by looking at long-term rates of hernia recurrence. In the past, reports have shown laparoscopic inguinal hernia repair can have rates of recurrence exceeding 10 % and that the incidence of recurrence increases as patients are further out from their operation [12, 13]. However, more recent research indicates that the rate of recurrence for conventional TEP varies from 2 to 3% due to the increased use of laparoscopic procedures [13, 15]. However, follow-up times vary significantly between studies and only three reports included in the Meta analyses have follow-up times greater than 3 years [13, 15]. Because of this, it is challenging to compare recurrence rates across many research and institutions with accuracy. In our study, 2.9 % of patients had a hernia recurrence with a mean follow-up time of



greater than 6 months. Timing of recurrence was 3 month postoperatively. The recurrence rate in this study is comparable to those reported in recent Meta analyses and suggests the long-term efficacy of the technique is similar to conventional repair [13, 15]. Our results are favorable when compared to conventional three-port repair and suggest the addition of a third port is not routinely necessary to efficiently perform the operation. Most notably, the removal of a single port does not seem to have any effect on the incidence of intraoperative complications, postoperative problems, or hernia recurrence. The two-port technique described remains our method of choice for inguinal hernia repair and has now begun to be taught to all incoming surgical residents at our institution.

## 5. CONCLUSION

With big 3DMax™ Mesh, two-port TEP repair looks to be a practical, safe, and effective approach for treating inguinal hernias. It should be viewed as a less invasive alternative to traditional three-port TEP repair.

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### Funding Statement

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### Conflicts of Interest

Authors declared that they have no competing interests.

### Availability of the Data and Materials

All relevant data analyzed during this study are presented in tabular form in this published article. The original datasets used during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request

Informed consent statement was obtained from all the participants in the study.

### Ethical Approval

Our study protocol number 720, was approved by the TBRI ethical committee board under Federal Wide Assurance (FWA 00010609), and the study was conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association's Code of Ethics for Human Experiments (Declaration of Helsinki).

### Authors' contribution

HeshamA.Elmeligy and Mohamed A.Elashry sharing in design of the study. HeshamA.Elmeligy, and Mohamed A.Elashry were involved in data analysis, interpretation and manuscript writing and HeshamA.Elmeligy collected the data from medical records. All authors shared in reviewing and approval of the final manuscripts.

### Consent for publication

Not applicable

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