E-ISSN 2250-0944

ISSN 2250-1150

doi: 10.48047/ijprt/15.02.221

Laser vs. Conventional Surgical Treatment of Hemorrhoids AComparative Study of Outcomes and Complications

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Abstract

A new randomized controlled experimental comparison between laser and conventional excisional hemorrhoidectomy demonstrates improved outcomes and reduced complications. The objective of the study was to evaluate operative time, postoperative pain scores, wound healing time, complication rates, and recurrence between laser hemorrhoidectomy and conventional excisional technique. A total of 120 adult patients with symptomatic grade II–III hemorrhoids were randomized equally. Laser-treated patients exhibited significantly shorter operative time (mean ± SD: 18.2 ± 4.1 min vs. 32.5 ± 5.8 min, $p < 0.001$), reduced early postoperative pain (VAS day 1: 3.2 ± 1.1 vs. 5.8 ± 1.4, $p < 0.001$), accelerated wound healing (10.4 ± 2.3 days vs. 14.7 ± 3.1 days, $p < 0.001$), lower overall complication rate (8% vs. 22%, $p = 0.02$), and comparable recurrence rate at six months (4% vs. 6%, $p = 0.65$). Findings indicate that laser hemorrhoidectomy offers statistically significant benefits in terms of efficiency, patient comfort, and recovery, without compromise to long-term efficacy. Keywords: laser hemorrhoidectomy; conventional excisional hemorrhoidectomy; postoperative outcomes.

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Introduction

Hemorrhoidal disease remains one of the most prevalent anorectal conditions encountered in surgical practice. Manifesting as symptomatic engorgement and ulceration of the vascular

cushions at the anal canal, it significantly impairs quality of life through pain, bleeding, and varied complications. Conventional excisional hemorrhoidectomy has long constituted the standard definitive treatment for advanced symptomatic hemorrhoids. However, such procedures are often associated with substantial postoperative pain, protracted wound healing, and notable complication rates. Consequently, ongoing efforts seek modalities that preserve efficacy while minimizing patient discomfort and recovery time.1-5

In recent years, application of laser technology in anorectal surgery has emerged as a potential advancement. Laser hemorrhoidectomy utilizes focused photothermal energy to ablate hemorrhoidal tissue with minimal collateral damage, promising reduced postoperative pain and faster tissue repair. Several small-scale trials have explored laser applications, yet many lack robust comparison to conventional techniques, or are limited by sample size, heterogeneous outcome measures, or outdated patient management standards. The need persists for a rigorous, adequately powered experimental study to evaluate laser versus conventional excisional hemorrhoidectomy, employing standardized endpoints, up-to-date perioperative care, and statistical verification.6-7

This study introduces a novel, randomized comparative design involving adult patients with grade II–III symptomatic hemorrhoids. The methodology emphasizes consistent operative conditions and objective postoperative assessments. The measured variables include operative time, early pain scores, wound healing duration, complication incidence, and six-month recurrence—parameters reflecting both immediate and intermediate clinical performance.8-10

Emphasis is placed on statistical significance across outcome domains, ensuring that observed differences reflect true clinical benefit rather than chance. The study design incorporates randomized allocation, sample size determination via epidemiologic software, and intention-to-treat analysis to sustain methodological integrity. This experimental trial therefore represents a substantial technical and evidence-based contribution, addressing prior research gaps by delivering comprehensive, up-to-date comparative data with implications for surgical practice.

Methodology

A prospective, randomized controlled experimental trial enrolled 120 adult participants aged 18–65 presenting with symptomatic grade II–III hemorrhoids confirmed by clinical evaluation at Social

Security Teaching Hospital, Lahore; patients were assigned equally to laser and conventional excisional surgical groups using computer-generated random allocation. Sample size was calculated via Epi Info™ applying 90 % power, $\alpha = 0.05$, and expected reduction in postoperative pain score difference of 2 units (SD ≈ 1.5), yielding n = 60 per group. Inclusion criteria comprised symptomatic internal hemorrhoids grade II–III refractory to conservative management; exclusion criteria included previous anorectal surgery, bleeding diathesis, immunocompromise, pregnancy, or coexisting anorectal disease. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant, with documented explanation of procedures, risks, and rights. All procedures were performed under standardized anesthesia and perioperative care. Outcomes measured included operative time, postoperative pain via VAS at day 1 and day 7, wound healing time (days to epithelialization), complication rates (bleeding, infection, anal stenosis), and recurrence at six months. Data analysis utilized intention-to-treat approach, comparing means with t-tests and proportions with chi-square tests; $p < 0.05$ considered statistically significant. Analyses were conducted using appropriate statistical software with blinded outcome assessment to ensure objectivity.

Results

Table 1. Demographic and Baseline Characteristics

Variable	Laser Group (n=60)	Conventional Group (n=60)	p-value
Age (years)	44.3 ± 10.2	45.1 ± 9.8	0.68
Gender (M/F)	32/28	30/30	0.72
Grade II / III ratio	38/22	40/20	0.66
BMI (kg/m²)	26.1 ± 3.5	26.5 ± 3.8	0.54

Table 2. Operative and Early Postoperative Outcomes

Outcome	Laser Group	Conventional Group	p-value
Operative time (min)	18.2 ± 4.1	32.5 ± 5.8	<0.001
VAS Day 1	3.2 ± 1.1	5.8 ± 1.4	<0.001
VAS Day 7	1.1 ± 0.7	2.4 ± 0.9	<0.001

Table 3. Healing, Complications, and Recurrence

Outcome	Laser Group	Conventional Group	p-value
Wound healing (days)	10.4 ± 2.3	14.7 ± 3.1	<0.001
Complication rate (%)	8 % (n=5)	22 % (n=13)	0.02
Recurrence at 6 months (%)	4 % (n=2)	6 % (n=3)	0.65

All values are mean ± SD unless otherwise indicated. Statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Operative time and pain scores were markedly lower in the laser group, with highly significant p-values. Wound healing occurred substantially faster, and complication incidence was reduced. Recurrence rates were comparable, indicating no compromise in mid-term efficacy.

Discussion

The reduced operative time observed with laser hemorrhoidectomy supports enhanced procedural efficiency, consistent with emerging laser-based anorectal applications observed in contemporary studies; rapid ablation with precise targeting likely underlies this improvement. The significantly lower early postoperative pain affirms the presumed advantage of focused photothermal energy minimizing collateral tissue trauma, aligning with modern theories of reduced nociceptive activation and expedited neurosensory recovery. Accelerated wound healing in the laser group further corroborates the hypothesis that limited collateral damage enhances rapid re-epithelialization and reduces inflammatory burden.11-14

Lower complication rates with laser treatment, including reduced bleeding and infection, indicate potential for safer recovery profiles. This suggests that laser application achieves effective tissue ablation while preserving surrounding structures, mitigating risks of anal stenosis or delayed hemostasis that sometimes accompany conventional excision.15-17

Comparable recurrence rates affirm that the laser approach maintains therapeutic efficacy without increased likelihood of symptomatic return. This finding addresses a critical concern that expedited or conservative removal might compromise durability; the present data demonstrate equivalence at mid-term follow-up.18-20

These results offer meaningful clinical implications: transitioning to laser hemorrhoidectomy could confer tangible patient-centered benefits—including comfort and rapid recovery—without sacrificing long-term outcomes. From a systems-level perspective, shorter operation duration may enhance operative throughput and resource utilization. Enhanced patient satisfaction and reduced postoperative morbidity potentially reduce adjunctive analgesic use and follow-up costs.

This study fills methodological and evidentiary gaps by providing adequately powered, randomized evidence in a modern context. The standardized measurement of operative metrics, pain scores, healing time, complications, and recurrence strengthens the validity of conclusions. These findings support integration of laser technology into conventional surgical practice, provided that facility resources and surgeon training are aligned accordingly.

Future studies may build on these results by exploring cost-effectiveness, long-term outcomes beyond six months, and applicability across different hemorrhoid grades or patient populations. Investigation into learning curves, equipment costs, and patient quality-of-life indices would further enhance translational value.

Conclusion

Laser hemorrhoidectomy provides statistically significant reductions in operative time, postoperative pain, wound healing duration, and complication rates, while maintaining recurrence rates comparable to conventional excision. This study addresses evidence gaps by delivering robust comparative data supporting a transition toward laser-based intervention, with further research warranted into cost-effectiveness and long-term outcomes.

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