Comparison of results between dynamic compression plate and interlocking nail for the management of fracture shaft of humerus

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Abstract

Surgical fixation of a fracture of the shaft of humerus can be achieved by Plating or Nailing. Plating provides satisfactory result, but requires extensive dissection, and meticulous radial nerve protection. The theoretical advantage of intramedullary nailing included less invasive surgery, an undisturbed fracture hematoma and use of a load sharing device support. This study compares the two more commonly used interventions: locking/dynamic compression plating and locked intramedullary nailing. Patients admitted were randomly assigned to either ILN group (Group A) or DCP group (Group B). In group a, internal fixation with interlocking nail done. In the plating group (Group B), fixation was done with 4.5 mm dynamic/locking compression plates using either anterolateral or posterior approach. All the cases were regularly followed up. Functional outcome is determined on the basis of disability arm shoulder and hand score (DASH). Union was present in 18 (90%) patients in the ILN group whereas in the DCP group, union was present in the 17 (85%) patients. Average union time is 7.83 with standard deviation of 1.54 weeks in the ILN group and 8.64 with standard deviation of 1.96 weeks in the DCP group. DASH score for the ILN group is 33.74 with standard deviation of 14.18 whereas it is 27.66 with standard deviation of 10.32 in the DCP group. The DASH score of the two groups is statistically insignificant (p > 0.05). Both the modalities of treatment are good as far as union of the fracture is concerned, but considering the rate of complications we concluded that dynamic compression plating offers better result than interlocking nailing with respect to pain and function of the shoulder joint.

Keywords: DCP, ILN, dash

Introduction

Fractures of the shaft of the humerus account for approximately 3%-5% of all fractures in adults. Out of which 60% involve middle third of the diaphysis, 30% involve proximal third of the diaphysis and 10% involve distal third of diaphysis. Most can be treated conservatively as charnley stated, it is perhaps the easiest of the major long bones to treat by conservative methods, but the current emphasis is on holistic approach to patient care, therefore the approach for the management of fracture shaft of humerus has changed from splintage and prolonged immobilization to internal fixation and early mobilization, with return to normal function as early as possible. The closed treatment methods available are (1) Hanging cast (2) Coaptation or U-shaped brachial splint (3) Velpeau dressing (4) Shoulder spica cast (5) Skeletal traction (6) Functional brace (7) Above elbow POP shoulder hood. The two modalities of internal fixation in fracture shaft of humerus are plate osteosynthesis and intramedullary nailing. Surgical fixation of a fracture of the shaft of humerus can be achieved by plating, nailing or by external fixation. Plating provides satisfactory results but requires extensive dissection, and meticulous radial nerve protection. The plate may fail in osteoporotic bone. With the success of intramedullary fixation of fractures of the femur and tibia, there was speculation that intramedullary nailing might be more appropriate for humeral shaft fractures than plating. The theoretical advantage of intramedullary nailing 2 included less invasive surgery, an undisturbed fracture hematoma and use of a load sharing device support. There is always a tug of war with certain advantages and disadvantages of both procedure between advocates of nails and plates more so in fracture shaft of humerus. This study compares the two more commonly used interventions: locking/dynamic compression plating
and locked intramedullary nailing.

**Aims and Objectives**
The aims and objectives of this study is to evaluate the results and functional outcome of locking/dynamic compression plating and interlocking nailing for the management of fracture shaft of humerus.

**Materials and Methods**
Design of the study: This is a prospective study.
Place of the study: Patliputra medical college and hospital, Dhanbad Period of study: July 2017 to July 2019.

**Inclusion criteria**
1. Patient aged 18 years and above.
2. Only the diaphyseal humeral fractures.
3. Fresh fractures (10 days).

**Exclusion criteria**
1. Fracture of upper and lower ends of humerus.
2. Patients treated conservatively.
3. Pathological fractures.
4. Segmental fractures.
5. Fractures with associated neural or vascular injury.
6. Patients with history of a previous humerus fracture.
7. Grade III open fractures.

Patients admitted were randomly assigned to either ILN group (Group A) or DCP group (Group B). In group A, internal fixation with interlocking nail done. In the plating group (Group B), fixation was done with 4.5 mm dynamic/locking compression plates using either anterolateral or posterior approach, depending on the fracture configuration and the surgeon preference. Fixation of at least six cortices, preferably eight cortices, both proximal and distal to the fracture was obtained in every patients. Follow up: All the cases were regularly followed up. Following parameters were recorded during follow up: Pain at the fracture site, Fracture union, Functional outcome, complications like non-union, infection, implant failure and nerve injury were noted. Functional outcome is determined on the basis of disability arm shoulder and hand score (DASH) 3. Based on score it is divided into four grades Excellent 0 – 20; Good 21 – 40; Fair 41 - 60; Poor > 60 To compare results of study with other standard studies we have used chi-square test. By using this test we have calculated P value.

**Observation and Results**
In all, 40 patients with fracture shaft of humerus were treated operatively in department of orthopaedics Patliputra medical college and hospital, Dhanbad. Most of the patients were between 20 -39 years. The average duration of follow up in our study in Group B was 10.15 months and in Group A it was 10.4 months. The average interval between injury and internal fixation was 8.1 days in the Group A and 8.5 days in the Group B.

**Location of fracture**

| Anatomical location of fractures | No. Of patients | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Upper third                      | 2              | 5%         |
| Junction of upper and middle third| 5              | 12.5%      |
| Middle third                     | 24             | 60%        |
| Junction of middle and lower third| 8              | 20%        |
| Lower third                      | 1              | 2.5%       |

**Types of Fracture**
Type of fractures in these two groups is statistically insignificant (p>.05).

| Table 2: Types of fracture |
|-----------------------------|
| Group-a | Group-b | Total    |
|---------|---------|----------|
| Closed  | 15(75%) | 16(80%)  | 31(77.5%) |
| Compound| 5(25%)  | 4(20%)   | 9(22.5%)  |

**Distribution of types of fracture**
Union Time: The average union time in Group-A was 7.83 weeks, whereas in Group B average union time was 8.64 weeks. The average of two groups is statistically not significant (p>.05).

Union Percentage: Union was present in 18 patients in the group A and in the 17 patients in the group B. Nonunion was present in 3 patients in group B and in 2 patients in the group A.

Complications: There is one superficial and deep infection in group A whereas in group B, 4 patients were having superficial infection and 1 patient were having deep infection. Shortening occurred in 3 patients in group A and in 2 patients in the group B. There was non-union in 3 patients in group B and in 2 patients in the group A. Radial nerve and axillary nerve neuropraxia occurred in 1 patient in group A and there was only radial nerve neuropraxia in 2 patients in group B. All patients with nerve injury recovered. Impingement occurred in 3 patients in the group A. There was failure of implant in one patient in group B. The difference of complications between the two groups is insignificant (p>.05).

Functional Outcome: Based on the DASH score the functional outcome of both groups were calculated, and divided into four categories. The functional outcome of the two groups is statistically insignificant (p>.05).

| Table 3: Outcome |
|------------------|
| Functional outcome| Group a | Group b | Total |
| Excellent        | 3(15%)  | 3(15%)  | 6(15%)|
| Good             | 10(50%) | 12(60%) | 22(55%)|
| Fair             | 3(15%)  | 2(10%)  | 5(12.5%)|
| Poor             | 2(10%)  | 0       | 2(5%)  |

**Discussion**
We treated a total of 40 patients in the Department of Orthopaedics, Patliputra medical college and hospital, Dhanbad between the period of July 2017 to July 2019. 20 patients were treated by humerus interlocking nail (GROUP A) and 20 patients were treated by dynamic/locking compression plating (GROUP B). Chapman et al. (2000) [4], Mc Cormack et al. (2000) [5], S Raghevendra et al. (2007) [6], Ting Teng Chao et al. (2005) [7], Changulani et al. (2007) [8], Putti et al. (2009) [9], Singisetti et al. (2010) [10], Naveen et al. (2013) [11], Wali et al. (2014) [12] also had compared the results of dynamic compression plating and interlocking nail for the fracture shaft of humerus.

1. Sex Distribution: Majority of the patients in both group were males (75% males in the group A and 75% males in the group B), so there was total 75% males and most were in the age group of 20 - 39 years (50% in the group A and 55% in the group B).Total 63.63% males was there in the Mc Cormack et al., M. Changulani et al. has 79.2% males in the DCP group and 86.9% in the ILN group.

2. Mean Age Distribution: Mean age of group A was 38.75 years as compared to 38.8 years of group B. In
MacCormack et al. mean age of DCP group was 49 years as compared to 40 years in the nailing group. In Putti et al., mean age was 39 years in the DCP group and 36 years in the ILN group.

3. Mode of Injury: In this study 62.5% patients sustained injury due to road traffic accident, 27.5% patients due to fall on ground, 10% patients due to direct trauma. In the McCormack et al. study, 63.63% patients sustained trauma due to the road traffic accident, 25% patients by fall on ground, and 11% patients by other causes. Singisetty et al. has mentioned that 85% of the trauma was due to the road traffic accident. Putti et al. has also reported road traffic accident as major cause of fracture (82.35%).

4. Type of Fracture: In this study, 77.5% of fracture is closed type of fracture whereas 22.5% of fracture is open type. McCormack et al. has mentioned 86.36% of fracture as closed type of fracture and 13.66% of fracture as open type.

5. Union Time: The average union time in interlocking nailing group (Group A) was 7.83 weeks whereas in Group B average union time was 8.64 weeks. Changulani et al. has reported union time of 8.9 weeks in the DCP group and 6.3 weeks in the ILN group. In Wali et al. union time is 15.2 weeks for the DCP group and 13.60 weeks for the ILN group.

6. Union Percentage: Union was present in 18 patients (90%) and nonunion was present in 2 patients (10%) in the group A. whereas in group B union was present in 17 patients (85%) and nonunion was present in 3 (15%) patients. Changulani et al. has reported union in 39 patients (88.63%) out of 44 patients. Among 39 patients, 21 patients (87.5%) was in the DCP group and 18 patients (85.7%) was in the ILN group.

7. Implant Failure: There was one implant failure in the group B. Implant failure leading to re-operation was required in the 16% cases (Chapman et al.), 33.33% cases (McCormack et al.) and 1% cases (Putti et al.) in the respective studies. Singisetty et al. reported no implant failure in his series. Changulani et al. reported no implant failure in the DCP group and 1 (4.7%) implant in the ILN group. S Raghavendra reported 1 (5.55%) implant failure in the DCP group whereas no implant failure was present in the ILN group.

8. Non Union Percentage: Nonunion was present in 2 (10%) patients in group A and in 3 (15%) patients in the group B. Wali et al. reported nonunion in 8% patients in each group. McCormack et al. reported 1 (4.34%) nonunion in the DCP group and 2 (9.52%) nonunion in the ILN group. Singisetty et al. reported 1 (6.5%) nonunion in the DCP group and 1 (5%) nonunion in the ILN group. Putti et al. reported 6% nonunion in the DCP group. 1 patient from the Group A and 2 patients from the Group B of nonunion were lost, the remaining 1 patient from either group was treated by plating with bone grafting.

9. Post-Operative Nerve Injury: Radial nerve injury (Neuropaxia) was present in 1 (5%) patients in the ILN group and in 2 (10%) patients in the DCP group. Wali et al. reported radial nerve injury in the 2 (8%) patients in the DCP group. Changulani et al. reported radial nerve injury in the 1 (4.16%) patients in the DCP group. Putti et al. reported radial nerve palsy in the 2 (12.5%) patients in the ILN group.

10. Impingement: Impingement was present in the 3 (15%) patients in the ILN group. S Raghavendra et al. was reported in the 2 (11.11%) patients in the ILN group. McCormack et al. reported impingement in the 3 (14.28%) patients in the ILN group. Putti et al. also reported impingement in the 1 (6.25%) patients in the ILN group.

11. Functional outcome: The functional outcome is assessed by using the DASH Score. The mean DASH score of the group B is 27.66 with standard deviation of 10.32 whereas it is 33.74 with standard deviation of 14.18 for the ILN group. The minimum score for the DCP group is 8.33 and maximum is 50 whereas in the ILN group minimum score is 16.66 and maximum score is 62.50. 3 patients in the DCP group and 3 patients in the ILN group were having excellent result, 12 patients in the DCP group and 10 patients in the ILN group were having good functional outcome. 3 patient in the ILN group and 2 patients in the DCP group were having fair functional outcome, 2 patients in the ILN group were having poor functional outcome. Naveen et al. reported excellent functional outcome in 6 patients, good functional outcome in 5 patients, fair in 5 patients, poor in the 2 patients in the DCP group whereas excellent functional outcome was present in the 5 patients, good in 4 patients, fair in 3 patients, poor in 4 patients in the ILN group. Wali et al. calculated the functional outcome using American shoulder and elbow surgeons score, which was 44.1 in the DCP group and 43.2 in the ILN group. McCormack et al. analysed the functional outcome by the ASES Score, which was 48 in the DCP group and 47 in the ILN group.

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

40 patients with fracture shaft of humerus were treated operatively in the department of orthopaedics, patliputra medical college and hospital, Dhanbad. Most of the patients (52.5%) were in the age group 20 - 39 years. Mostly patients (75%) were male. Road traffic accident was the most common (62.5%) mode of injury. The fracture was located in the middle third of shaft in the 24 patients (60%). 77.5% fractures were closed type. Union was present in 18 (90%) patients in the ILN group whereas in the DCP group, union was present in the 17 (85%) patients. Average union time is 7.83 with standard deviation of 1.54 weeks in the ILN group and 8.64 with standard deviation of 1.96 weeks in the DCP group. Impingement was present in the 3 patients in the ILN group. Axillary nerve neuropaxia was present in 1 patient in the ILN group.

Functional outcome is assessed by using the DASH Score. The mean DASH score of the group B is 27.66 with standard deviation of 10.32 whereas it is 33.74 with standard deviation of 14.18 for the ILN group. The minimum score for the DCP group is 8.33 and maximum is 50 whereas in the ILN group minimum score is 16.66 and maximum score is 62.50. 3 patients in the DCP group and 3 patients in the ILN group were having excellent result, 12 patients in the DCP group and 10 patients in the ILN group were having good functional outcome. 3 patient in the ILN group and 2 patients in the DCP group were having fair functional outcome, 2 patients in the ILN group were having poor functional outcome. Naveen et al. reported excellent functional outcome in 6 patients, good functional outcome in 5 patients, fair in 5 patients, poor in the 2 patients in the DCP group whereas excellent functional outcome was present in the 5 patients, good in 4 patients, fair in 3 patients, poor in 4 patients in the ILN group. Wali et al. calculated the functional outcome using American shoulder and elbow surgeons score, which was 44.1 in the DCP group and 43.2 in the ILN group. McCormack et al. analysed the functional outcome by the ASES Score, which was 48 in the DCP group and 47 in the ILN group.

Conclusion

We came to the conclusion that both the modalities of treatment are good as far as union of the fracture is concerned, but considering the rate of complications we concluded that dynamic compression plating offers better result than interlocking nailing with respect to pain and function of the shoulder joint. We therefore concluded that in cases where
both dynamic compression plating and interlocking nailing can be done, we would prefer to use locking /dynamic compression plate.

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