Complications in growth-friendly spinal surgeries for early-onset scoliosis: Literature review

Michał Latalski, Marek Fatyga, Ireneusz Sowa, Magdalena Wojciak, Grzegorz Starobrat, Anna Danielewicz

Background
The treatments for early-onset scoliosis (EOS), defined as curvature of the spine with onset before 10 years of age, continue to pose a great challenge for pediatric orthopedics. The treatment goals for EOS include minimizing spinal deformity while maximizing thoracic volume and pulmonary function. Different surgical techniques have different advantages and drawbacks; however, the two major concerns in the management of EOS are repeated surgeries and complications.

Aim
To review the current literature to assess the safety of EOS surgical treatment in terms of the rate of complications and unplanned surgeries.

Methods
In January 2021 two independent reviewers systematically searched three electronic medical databases (PubMed, the Cochrane Library, and Embase) for relevant articles. Every step of the review was done according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines. Due to the heterogeneity of articles and topics after data analysis, a descriptive (synthetic) analysis was performed.

Results
A total of 2136 articles were found. Forty articles were included in this systematic review, after applying our inclusion and exclusion criteria. EOS surgery has a varying but high rate of complications. The most frequent complications were categorized as implant (54%), general (17%), wound (15%) and alignment (12%).
The rate of complications might have been even higher than reported, as some authors do not report all types of complications. About 54% of patients required unplanned surgeries due to complications, which comprised 15% of all surgeries.

**CONCLUSION**

The literature concerning the definitions, collection, and interpretation of data regarding EOS surgery complications is often difficult to interpret. This creates problems in the comparison, analysis, and improvement of spine surgery practice. Additionally, this observation indicates that data on the incidence of complications can be underestimated, and should be interpreted with caution. Awareness of the high rate of complications of EOS surgery is crucial, and an optimal strategy for prevention should become a priority.

**Key Words:** Scoliosis; Spine; Growth-friendly implant; Surgery; Complications; Treatment

©The Author(s) 2021. Published by Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved.

---

**INTRODUCTION**

Early-onset scoliosis (EOS) is defined as curvature of the spine ≥ 10° in the frontal plane with onset before 10 years of age[1]. EOS is not a diagnosis, but can rather be defined as the age of onset of a coronal plane spinal deformity. As such, EOS includes spinal deformities resulting from congenital malformations, neuromuscular conditions, inherited bone dysplasias and syndromes, and, in idiopathic cases, with no underlying disorder. As EOS has such a wide variety of etiologies, its natural history varies widely, and in many cases is established at the time of the child’s diagnosis which reveals the spinal deformity[2]. The natural history of untreated progressive EOS was reported on by Scott and Morgan in 1955[3]. They documented the progression of curves from 30 to 100 degrees. Moreover, 4 patients out of 28 died before the age of 20 years, of cardiorespiratory disease. Relentless curve progression, in the absence of treatment, results in increasing chest wall deformity. Rib rotation and curve progression produce restrictive pulmonary disease, with worsening pulmonary function, as documented by diminishing vital capacity and total lung volume. If left untreated, the spinal deformity produces chest wall rotation, which obliterates the space available for the lungs[4]. The treatment for EOS remains a great challenge for pediatric orthopedics. The treatment goals for EOS, regardless of the diagnosis, are the same: minimizing spinal deformity while maximizing thoracic volume and pulmonary function[5]. When conservative treatment is ineffective, the option is surgery[6]. Different techniques have different advantages and drawbacks. Those most often used are traditional growing rods (TGR), vertical expandable prosthetic titanium ribs (VEPTR), magnetically controlled growing rods (MCGR), and the Shilla growth guidance system (SGGS). Repeated surgeries and complications are two major concerns in EOS management. The aim of the study was to review the current
literature to assess the safety of EOS surgical treatment in terms of the rate of complications and unplanned surgeries.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Literature search strategy**

The systematic review was conducted according to the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)\[7\] (Figure 1). In January 2021, a search of three electronic medical databases (PubMed, the Cochrane Library, and Embase) was performed by three independent authors. We combined the terms: “early-onset scoliosis” OR “eos” OR “juvenile scoliosis” OR “infantile scoliosis” OR “tgr” OR “veptr” OR “MCGR” OR “Shilla” OR “growth-friendly” AND “complication”. The reference lists of all retrieved articles were reviewed for the further identification of potentially relevant studies, and assessed using the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Selection criteria**

The eligible studies for the reference review included those dealing with complications in the operative treatment of EOS. The initial screening of titles and abstracts was made using the following inclusion criteria: studies of any level of evidence, reporting clinical results, published in peer review journals, and dealing with complications in operative EOS treatment. Exclusion criteria were: studies with complications in the non-operative treatment of EOS, in vitro, or animal model studies. We also excluded all the remaining duplicates, articles dealing with other topics, and those with poor scientific methodology, or without an accessible abstract. Reference lists were also manually searched for further relevant studies. Reviews, abstracts, case reports, conference presentations, and expert opinions, were excluded.

All papers were tagged: (1) according to the system used: TGR, VEPR, MCGR, Shilla (guided growth); (2) the number of cases as a “big group” – more than 30 cases, “medium group” – 10-29 cases, and “small group” – less than 10 cases; and (3) the time of follow-up – “short” – less than 2 years, “minimum” – more than 2 years, and “optimum” – more than 5 years. The final inclusion criteria were primarily limited to “big group” and “optimum follow-up”. During the paper extraction, no papers with VEPR, and only one with Shilla and MCGR, were found, so that the groups’ extracted papers had to be extended with “medium group” and “minimum” follow-up.

**Data extraction and criteria appraisal**

Three investigators independently reviewed each article. Discrepancies between the reviewers were resolved by discussion and consensus. All data were extracted from article texts, tables, and figures, and put into tables in an Excel sheet.

Complications were categorized as wound-related, implant-related, alignment-related, and general (surgical or medical). Surgical procedures were classified as planned [implantations, lengthenings, final fusions (FF)], and unplanned (revisions). Implantation procedures were included as equal to the number of patients. Not-given information was calculated using specific formulas based on the known data, i.e., the mean number of operations per patient, the number of patients, and the number of operations. Some data – especially in TGR-group patients - like the number of lengthenings and derived information – were estimated based on the mean duration between lengthenings, using formulas, i.e., the mean duration between lengthenings, and follow-up, i.e. the number of lengthenings. The mean durations between lengthenings, if not specified, were taken as the mean value of durations between lengthenings specified in other papers. These data were marked in the table with the symbol “1”. In some papers the number of unplanned surgeries was not provided. In those cases, such complications as deep infections and implant fractures were estimated as an indication of at least one revision/unplanned surgery. Some fields were left empty when there were not enough data to estimate the value. When the data in the main text and the tables did not match, the higher value was taken.
Latalski M et al. Complications in surgeries for early-onset scoliosis

RESULTS

Included studies
A total of 2136 articles were found. After the exclusion of duplicates, 1300 articles were selected. At the end of the first screening, following the previously described selection criteria, we selected 615 articles eligible for full-text reading. Ultimately, after full-text reading and reference-list checks, we selected \( n = 40 \) articles, following previously adopted criteria. A PRISMA flowchart of the method of selection and screening is presented in Figure 1. The included articles focus on complications in the most commonly used systems – TGR (17 papers), VEPTR (13 papers), MCGR (8 papers), and Shilla (guided growth) (7 papers). Data extracted from these papers were assigned to the appropriate system. Harris et al[8], 2020, in their paper analyzed the impact of patient and surgical factors on the proximal complications and revision rates of early-onset scoliosis patients using a multicenter database. Total 353 patients met the inclusion criteria: growing rods = 318 and VEPTR = 35. Helenius et al[9], 2018, analyzed the outcomes of surgeries using growing rods in patients with severe vs moderate early-onset scoliosis. From the group of 214 patients, 198 were treated with TGR and 14 with MCGR. As in the main texts, the data were not separated out, so we included them in the TGR group, as the vast majority were treated with this system. Papers by Akbarnia et al[10], Bachabi et al[11], Haapala et al[12], Andras et al[13], and Luhmann et al[14], dealt with comparisons between TGR and MCGR, TGR, and VEPTR, Shilla and MCGR, and TGR and Shilla, respectively, so they appear in the table for the applicable system. The demographic findings of the included articles are summarized in Table 1.

Tables 2-5 present the number of surgical procedures (planned and unplanned). The number of patients is re-listed for easier reference to the remaining data. As the quantitative data depends on the number of analyzed patients, the second part of the table presents the percentage data. It shows the percentage of unplanned surgeries, the percentage of unplanned surgeries to all surgeries, the percentage of unplanned surgeries to patients with at least one complication, and the ratio of planned to unplanned surgeries. Eight papers were excluded from these tables, as there were no data on unplanned surgeries. Some fields were left empty if there were insufficient data. From the 40 analyzed papers 12 described all 4 complications (wound and implant-related, alignment, and medical/surgical). These data are marked in the table with the symbol “2”. In the others, some of these complications were not described. It
Table 1 Demographic data from the reviewed articles

| Ref.        | Construct | Subject | Sex (male/female) | Age at IP | Follow up | Diagnosis | No of patient with final spinal fusion | Comments, kind of complication analyzed |
|-------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 Bess et al.[15], 2010 | TGR | 140 | 71/59 | 6 | 5.0 | Neuromuscular (n = 52), idiopathic (n = 40), congenital (n = 24), and other (n = 24) | 50 | W, I, A, M |
| 2 Du et al.[16], 2020 | | 167 | 69/98 | 7.2 | 10.7 | Idiopathic (n = 45), neuromuscular (n = 56), syndromic (n = 43), congenital (n = 21), other (n = 2) | 167 | Analyzed patients who had undergone a FF after growing-rod treatment, W, I, A, M |
| 3 Andras et al.[13], 2015 | | 36 | nd | 6.1 | 4.3 | Syndromal (n = 10), idiopathic (n = 11), congenital (n = 2), neuromuscular (n = 13) | nd | I, M |
| 4 Myung et al.[17], 2014 | | 159 | nd | 5 | 4.7 | Neuromuscular (n = 46), congenital (n = 42), idiopathic (n = 37), syndromal (n = 34) | nd | I |
| 5 Arandi et al.[18], 2014 | | 175 | 78/97 | 5.9 | 5.2 | Idiopathic (n = 69), syndromal (n = 62), neuromuscular (n = 44) | nd | I |
| 6 Liang et al.[19], 2015 | | 55 | 16/39 | 6.8 | 38.4 | Congenital (n = 28), idiopathic (n = 6), syndromal (n = 8), neuromuscular (n = 6) and miscellaneous disorders (n = 7) | 10 | W, I, A, M |
| 7 Ramirez et al.[20], 2020 | | 67 | 32/35 | 6 | 4.1 | Only non-ambulatory neuromuscular early-onset scoliosis | nd | W, I, M |
| 8 Yamaguchi et al.[21], 2014 | | 176 | nd | nd | 4.7 | Congenital (n = 48), neuromuscular (n = 42), syndromal (n = 37), idiopathic scoliosis (n = 32) and miscellaneous (n = 17) | nd | I |
| 9 Poe-Kochert et al.[22], 2016 | | 100 | 42/58 | 7 | 4.3 | Neuromuscular (n = 38), syndromic (n = 31), idiopathic (n = 22), congenital (n = 9) | 100 | Analyzed patients who had undergone a FF after growing-rod treatment; W, I |
| 10 Kabbirian et al.[23], 2014 | | 379 | 177/202 | 6.3 | 5.3 | nd | nd | Only deep infection analyzed |
| 11 Hosseini et al.[24], 2018 | | 274 | 114/160 | 6.7 | 6.3 | Neuromuscular (n = 84), congenital (n = 43), syndromic (n = 89), idiopathic (n = 58) | nd | I |
| 12 Johnston et al.[25], 2013 | | 27 | nd | 5.3 | 4.5 | Neuromuscular (n = 6), idiopathic (n = 11), syndromic (n = 10) | 6 | Comparing with cast treatment, complications in total |
| 13 Bachabi et al.[11], 2020 | | 50 | nd | 5.5 | 8.3 | nd | nd | W, I, A, M |
| 14 Luhmann et al.[14], 2017 | | 18 | 18 | 7.7 | 7.4 | Idiopathic (n = 9), neuromuscular (n = 7), syndromic (n = 1), congenital (n = 1) | 17 | W, I, M |
| 15 Akbarnia et al.[11], 2014 | | 12 | 5 | 6.5 | 4.1 | Not given | nd | W, I, M |
| 16 Harris et al.[8], 2020 | | 353 | nd | 6 | 6.0 | Not given | nd | I, TGR -318 cases, 35 - VEPTR cases |
| 17 Helenius et al.[9], 2018 | | 214 | 94/120 | 5.6 | 6.0 | Neuromuscular (n = 68), congenital (n = 28), syndromic (n = 74), idiopathic (n = 44) | 49 | W, I, M TGR cases 198) MCCGR cases 16 |
| 18 Gadepalli et al.[26], 2011 | VEPTR | 26 | 16/10 | 7.58 | 7.0 | Congenital or infantile scoliosis (n = 12), neuromuscular scoliosis (n = 5), unspecified structural thoracic disorder (n = 7), Jeune syndrome (n = 2) | nd | W, I, M |
| 19 Bachabi et al | | 22 | nd | 4.3 | 7.7 | nd | nd | W, I, M |
| Study | Patients | Complications | Type | Conclussions |
|-------|----------|---------------|------|-------------|
| "Congenital (n = 25)" | 21 Murphy et al [28], 2016 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, M |
| "Congenital (n = 13)" | 22 Berger-Groch et al [29], 2020 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, M |
| "Early onset idiopathic scoliosis (n = 1), neuro muscular (n = 11), post-thoracotomy: scoliosis (n = 2), Sprengel deformity (n = 1), hyperkyphosis (n = 2), myopathy (n = 1), syndromic (n = 5)" | 23 Hasler et al [30], 2010 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Early onset idiopathic scoliosis | W, I, A, M |
| "Congenital (n = 3), neuromuscular (n = 3, congenital (n = 9)" | 24 Latalski et al [31], 2011 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, A, M |
| "Congenital (n = 9), neuromuscular (n = 6)" | 25 Hell et al [32], 2005 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 30), congenital (n = 44), syndromic (n = 18), idiopathic (n = 11)" | 26 Garg et al [33], 2014 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Congenital (n = 23), neuromuscular (n = 12), syndromic (n = 14), idiopathic (n = 2), other (n = 14)" | 27 Waldhausen et al [34], 2016 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 61), syndromic (n = 36), congenital (n = 64), idiopathic (n = 3)" | 28 Striano et al [35], 2019 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 19), congenital (n = 7), idiopathic (n = 3)" | 29 Lucas et al [36], 2013 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 18), congenital (n = 13), syndromic (n = 5), idiopathic (n = 2)" | 30 Garg et al [37], 2016 | Only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 4), syndromic (n = 19), idiopathic (n = 6), congenital (n = 2)" | 31 Subramanian et al [38], 2018 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 10), syndromic (n = 20), congenital (n = 6)" | 32 Urbatski et al [39], 2020 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | W, I, A, M |
| "Neuromuscular (n = 4), syndromic (n = 4), idiopathic (n = 3), congenital (n = 1)" | 33 Akbarnia et al [40], 2014 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Neuromuscular | I, M |
| "Congenital (n = 11), neuromuscular (n = 10), syndromic (n = 4), idiopathic (n = 5)" | 34 Studer et al [41], 2019 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Congenital | W, I, A |
| "Syndromal (n = 8), idiopathic (n = 8), congenital (n = 6), neuromuscular (n = 8)" | 35 Kwan et al [42], 2017 | Only SSIs following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries were identified | Syndromal | W, I, A, |
probably means that the number of unplanned surgeries was understated.

Excluded from these tables were papers in which the number of unplanned surgeries was not specified, and were not calculated; some cases referred to final fusion, but it was not specified when, so the total number based on the duration between lengthenings was not possible to estimate.

Unplanned surgeries are due to complications which cannot be resolved conservatively. The total number of complications is much higher. Table 6 presents the total number of complications, the number of patients with a minimum of one complication, the percentage of complications in all patients, the percentage of patients with a minimum of one complication, the number of complications in complicated patients, the complication rate per surgical procedure in percentage terms, and the percentage complications requiring surgical procedures. Some cells in the table are empty because of insufficient data in the corresponding papers.

In Table 7 the total number of complications are divided into wound-related, implant-related, alignment, and surgical/medical-related. Only 12 out of 40 papers include analyses of all these types. The paper by Johnston et al[25], 2013, did not differentiate the types of complications, so this reference was excluded from Table 7.

Smith et al[48] published in 2015 a New Classification System to Report Complications in Growing Spine Surgery, and only 4 out of 23 papers published in 2016 used this system (Table 8).

**DISCUSSION**

Currently there is great interest in the concept of the continued growth of the spine and chest while treating spinal deformity in EOS patients. The risk of complications is inherent in correction surgeries, regardless of etiology. Many studies agree that in the case of neuromuscular scoliosis the probability of a complication is 35%, while for EOS the probability increases to 48%[49]. Watanabe et al[50] identified risk factors for complications in the treatment of early-onset scoliosis using the dual growing rod technique. Postoperative complications occurred after 119 out of 538 procedures (22%) and affected 50 patients (57%). Complications mostly included implant-related failures (72%), and infections (16%). The authors suggested that independent risk factors for postoperative complications included an increase of every 20° in the proximal thoracic Cobb angle, an increase of every 20° in the thoracic kyphosis angle, and 6 or more rod-
Table 2 The number of planned and unplanned surgical procedures in the traditional growing rods group

| Ref.             | Subject | Surgical procedures (n) | Planned surgical procedures (n) | Unplanned surgical procedure | % unplanned surgeries to all surgeries | % unplanned surgery to patients with at least one complication | Ratio of planned to unplanned surgery |
|------------------|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bess et al [15], 2010 | 140 | 897                     | 823                            | 74                           | 52.9\(^1\)                             | 91.4\(^2\)                                                  | 11.12                               |
| Du et al [16], 2020 | 167   | 199                     | 167                            | 32                           | 19.2\(^3\)                             | 16.1\(^3\)                                                  | 5.22                                |
| Andras et al [13], 2015 | 36    | 288                     | 259                            | 29                           | 80.6                                  | 10.1                                                        | 8.9                                 |
| Myung et al [17], 2014 | 159   | 1081\(^1\)              | 1050\(^1\)                     | 31\(^1\)                     | 19.5                                  | 83.8                                                        | 33.87                               |
| Arandi et al [18], 2014 | 175   | 1247\(^1\)              | 1190                           | 57\(^1\)                     | 32.6                                  | 71.3                                                        | 20.88                               |
| Liang et al [19], 2015 | 55    | 272                     | 263                            | 23\(^1\)                     | 41.8\(^2\)                             | 8.5\(^2\)                                                   | 11.43                               |
| Ramirez et al [20], 2020 | 67    | 463\(^1\)               | 396\(^1\)                      | 67                           | 100                                   | 163.4                                                      | 5.91                                |
| Poe-Kochert et al [22], 2016 | 100   | 157\(^1\)               | 100\(^1\)                      | 57\(^1\)                     | 37\(^1\)                               | 36.3\(^3\)                                                  | 285.0\(^3\)                        | 1.75                                |
| Kabirian et al [23], 2014 | 379   | 2344                    | 2274\(^4\)                     | 70                           | 18.5                                  | 166.7                                                      | 32.49                               |
| Luhmann et al [14], 2017 | 18    | 167                     | 141                            | 26                           | 144.4                                 | 15.6                                                       | 5.42                                |
| Akbarnia et al [10], 2014 | 12    | 73                      | 68                             | 5                            | 41.7                                  | 45.5                                                       | 13.6                                |
| Harris et al [8], 2020 | 353   | 3141\(^1\)              | 2895\(^5\)                     | 246                          | 69.7                                  | 174.5                                                      | 11.77                               |
| Helenius et al [9], 2018 | 214   | 1971                    | 1836                           | 133                          | 62.1                                  | 6.7                                                        | 13.8                                |

\(^1\)Data estimated based on the mean values of duration between lengthenings.
\(^2\)The values of the % of unplanned surgeries in which all four complications were analyzed in the paper.
\(^3\)Corresponds to the papers in which all the patients were after the final fusion.

lengthening procedures. According to Bess et al [15], the patients’ early age when carrying out the index surgery influenced the incidence of complications, but Watanabe did not confirm this. He believed that a patient’s being young at the time of the index surgery significantly reduced the risk of the child’s developing a significant deformity, the degree of which at the start of the treatment significantly affects the risk of its course. However, one should be aware of the inverse relationship between the age of the index surgery and the number of lengthenings in distraction-based methods [4].

Bess, and the Growing Spine Study Group, stated in publications that there was a 24% complication rate each time a growing-rod construct was surgically lengthened, and a 13% decrease in complications for each additional year of age at the time of the initial growing rod implantation [15]. Rod implantation below age 7 years, increasing kyphosis, and more severe major curve magnitude, have been shown to correlate with a higher rate of complications overall [51].

Surgical difficulties, as well as the potentially harmful effect of repeated anesthesia, have led to the adoption of magnetically controlled growing rods, and guided growth systems like Shilla. However, problems with the loss of fixation and failure of the implants in some cases persist [10,47]. Some authors have pointed out an additional problem connected with metal debris which appears in the serum and surrounding tissues [32]. Although it does not directly affect the outcome of the treatment, it is worth considering this occurrence as undesirable/a complication.

The most important issue is that authors define complications in different ways. In Andras et al [13], major complications are defined as any neurological injury and any
issue requiring surgery for implant revision or infection. In Ramirez et al.[20], complications are defined as any change from the normal postoperative course which occurred from the time of the surgery until the most recent follow-up visit. In McCarthy et al.[47], 2015, complications are defined as any problem requiring a return to the operating room, so all returns to the operating room were considered unanticipated. Some authors report major complications and some report the whole range of general complications.

### Table 3 The number of planned and unplanned surgical procedures in the vertical expandable prosthetic titanium ribs group

| Ref. | Subject | Surgical procedures (n) | Planned surgical procedures (n) | Unplanned surgical procedure n | % unplanned surgeries to all surgeries | % unplanned surgery to patients with at least one complication | Ratio of planned to unplanned surgery |
|------|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Murphy et al [28], 2016 | 25 | 232 | 188 | 40 | 160 | 17.2 | 266.7 | 4.69 |
| Gadeppalli et al[29], 2011 | 26 | 100 | 86 | 14 | 53.8 | 14.0 | | 6.14 |
| Berger-Groch et al[29], 2020 | 13 | 182 | 178 | 5 | 38.5 | 2.7 | | 35.6 |
| Hasler et al [30], 2010 | 23 | 187 | 172 | 15 | 65.2 | 8.0 | | 166.7 | 11.47 |
| Latalski et al [31], 2011 | 12 | 44 | 38 | 6 | 50 | 13.6 | | 75.0 | 6.13 |
| Striano et al [35], 2019 | 166 | 670 | 560 | 110 | 66.3 | 16.4 | | 275.0 | 5.09 |
| Lucas et al [36], 2013 | 54 | 184 | 152 | 30 | 55.6 | 16.3 | | 83.3 | 5.07 |
| Garg et al [37], 2016 | 38 | 410 | 350 | 60 | 157.9 | 14.6 | | | |

1Data estimated based on the mean values of duration between lengthenings.
2The values of the % of unplanned surgeries in which all four complications were analyzed in the paper.

### Table 4 The number of planned and unplanned surgical procedures in the magnetically controlled growing rods group

| Ref. | Subject | Surgical procedures (n) | Planned surgical procedures (n) | Unplanned surgical procedure n | % unplanned surgeries to all surgeries | % unplanned surgery to patients with at least one complication | Ratio of planned to unplanned surgery |
|------|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Subramanian et al[38], 2018 | 31 | 53 | 31 | 22 | 71 | 41.5 | 104.8 | 1.41 |
| Urbanski et al [39], 2020 | 47 | 60 | 47 | 13 | 27.7 | 21.7 | 81.3 | 3.62 |
| Akbarnia et al [10], 2014 | 12 | 16 | 12 | 4 | 33.3 | 25.0 | 100.0 | 3 |
| Studer et al[40], 2019 | 30 | 43 | 30 | 13 | 45.3 | 30.2 | 118.2 | 2.31 |
| Kwan et al[41], 2017 | 30 | 44 | 30 | 14 | 46.7 | 31.8 | 100.0 | 2.14 |
| Obid et al[42], 2020 | 22 | 46 | 19 | 5 | 22.7 | 10.9 | 41.7 | 3.8 |
| Lampe et al[43], 2019 | 24 | 43 | 24 | 19 | 79.2 | 44.2 | 172.7 | 1.26 |

2The values of the % of unplanned surgeries in which all four complications were analyzed in the paper.
For this study, complications were categorized as wound, implant, alignment, or general [surgical or medical]. Wound problems were classified as either superficial or deep infections, and other wound-related problems, such as painful scars. Implant complications included rod breakage, failure of foundation fixation such as hook or screw pullout, and implant prominence. Alignment complications included junctional kyphosis (proximal or distal), curve progression above or below the instrumented levels, and curve progression after definitive fusion. General complications included, but were not limited to, dural tears, hematomas, and postoperative cardiopulmonary and gastrointestinal complications. Unfortunately, not all authors evaluated all these kinds of complications together – 4 out of 17 in TGR, 3 out of 13 in VEPTR, 4 out of 8 in MCGR, and 1 out of 7 in Shilla. Only 16 out of 44 papers (36%) referred to alignment complication in the evaluation – mostly in MCGR (88%), and conversely to VEPTR (23%). Five papers (11%) (TGR) described only implant-related complications, and 5 only wound-related (4 VEPTR and 1 TGR). The most frequently evaluated set of complications were wound, implant, and medical-related – 13 papers (30% of the papers). The original idea of the paper was to evaluate the number of procedures used to treat complications categorized as either planned or unplanned. Planned procedures were defined as procedures which were scheduled as part of the routine growing-rod-treatment protocol. Unplanned procedures were defined as unscheduled surgical procedures performed to manage a complication. Unfortunately, there was no division into such treatments, so the data were simplified and surgical procedures were classified as planned (implantations, lengthenings, final fusions) and unplanned (revisions). In that case, the number of complications requiring surgical treatment could have been greater, as some of them could have been repaired during the planned lengthening procedure. Only 10 papers (23%) (2 TGR, 3 VEPTR, 4 MAGEC, 1 Shilla) included data with unplanned surgeries, and all described complications concurrently. FF significantly influenced the number of surgeries. Despite the number of patients with FFs being known, there were no data about the time of the FFs – so estimated data based on the mean follow-up times and durations between lengthening procedures were understated. Deleting these references from the statements in question leaves 6 papers with no TGR patients. Adding Smith's classification for evaluation as a criterion further reduces the number of papers to only one. That is why the analysis had to be simplified.

TGRs constitute the most commonly applied technique, and are considered the gold standard for EOS with long curves. In the reviewed papers, the complication rate per patient of the growing rod technique was very high and ranged from 19% to 208% (median 84%). Interestingly, Akbarnia et al presented a complication rate of 208%...
### Table 6 Number of complications analyzed in extracted papers

| Ref.       | Subject     | Total No. of complications | No. of patients with a minimum of one complication | % of complications in all patients | % of patients with a minimum one complication | No. of complications in complicated patients | Complication rate per surgical procedure (%) | % complications requiring surgical procedures |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| TGR        | Bess et al[15], 2010 | 140                         | 81                                                 | 122.1²                           | 57.9²                                         | 2.1²                                           | 19.1²                                         | 43.3³                                         |
|            | Du et al[16], 2020    | 167                         | 49                                                 | 29.3³                           | 19.2³                                         | 1.5³                                           | nd                                           | nd                                           |
|            | Andras et al [13], 2015 | 36                         | 47                                                 | 130.6                            | 80.6                                          | 1.6                                            | 16.3                                          | 61.7                                          |
|            | Myung et al [17], 2014 | 159                        | 64                                                 | 40.3                             | 23.3                                          | 1.7                                            | 5.9                                           | 48.4                                          |
|            | Arandi et al [18], 2014 | 175                        | 146                                                | 83.4                             | 45.7                                          | 1.8                                            | 11.7                                          | 39.0                                          |
|            | Liang et al [19], 2015 | 55                         | 42                                                 | 76.4²                            | 41.8³                                         | 1.8²                                           | 15.4²                                         | 54.8³                                         |
|            | Ramirez et al [20], 2020 | 67                         | 92                                                 | 137.3                            | 61.2                                          | 2.2                                            | 19.9                                          | 72.8                                          |
|            | Yamaguchi et al[21], 2014 | 176               | 44                                                 | 25.0                             | 14.8                                          | 1.7                                            | nd                                           | nd                                           |
|            | Poe-Kochert et al[22], 2016 | 100                      | 30                                                 | 30.0³                            | 20.0³                                         | 1.5³                                           | 19.1³                                         | 190.0                                         |
|            | Kabirian et al [23], 2014 | 379                        | 70                                                 | 18.5                             | 11.1                                          | 1.7                                            | 3.0                                           | nd                                           |
|            | Johnston et al [25], 2013 | 27                         | 23                                                 | 85.2                             | 44.4                                          | 1.9                                            | 12.8                                          | nd                                           |
|            | Bachabi et al [11], 2020 | 50                         | 45                                                 | 90.0³                            | 66.0³                                         | 1.4³                                           | 9.4³                                          | nd                                           |
|            | Luhmann et al[14], 2017 | 18                         | 26                                                 | 144.4                            | nd                                           | nd                                              | 15.6                                          | nd                                           |
|            | Akbarnia et al [10], 2014 | 12                         | 25                                                 | 208.3                            | 91.7                                          | 2.3                                            | 34.2                                          | nd                                           |
|            | Harris et al [8], 2020 | 353                        | 264                                                | 74.8                             | 39.9                                          | 1.9                                            | nd                                           | 93.2                                          |
|            | Helenius et al [9], 2018 | 214                       | 216                                                | 100.9                            | 45.3                                          | 2.2                                            | 11.0                                          | 61.6                                          |
| VEPTR      | Bachabi et al [11], 2020 | 22                        | 26                                                 | 118.2                            | 81.8                                          | 1.4                                            | 7.9                                           | nd                                           |
|            | Crews et al [27], 2018 | 151                        | 26                                                 | 17.2                             | 14.6                                          | 1.2                                            | 8.0                                           | nd                                           |
|            | Murphy et al [29], 2016 | 25                         | 41                                                 | 164.0                            | 60.0                                          | 2.7                                            | 17.7                                          | 97.6                                          |
|            | Gadepalli et al[26], 2011 | 26                      | 36                                                 | nd                               | 138.5                                         | nd                                             | nd                                           | 38.9                                          |
|            | Berger-Groch et al[29], 2020 | 13                 | 21                                                 | nd                               | 161.5                                         | nd                                             | nd                                           | 11.5                                          |
|            | Hasler et al [30], 2010 | 23                         | 31                                                 | 134.8³                           | 39.1²                                         | 3.4                                            | 16.6²                                         | 48.4                                          |
|            | Latalski et al [31], 2011 | 12                       | 15                                                 | 125.0³                           | 66.7²                                         | 1.9                                            | 34.1²                                         | 40.0                                          |
|            | Hell, et al       | 15                         | 3                                                  | 20.0                             | 20.0                                          | 1.0                                            | 10.7                                          | nd                                           |
The values of the % of unplanned surgeries in which all four complications were analyzed in the paper.

*Corresponds to the papers in which all patients were after final fusion.

TGR: Traditional growing rods; VEPTR: Vertical expandable prosthetic titanium ribs; MCGR: Magnetically controlled growing rods.

(wound, implant-related and medical) in only 12 patients, whereas the rate for deep infections was 19% in 379 cases. Comparing only implant-related complications, this parameter varied from 25% to 40% to 83% - the authors analyzed a similar group of approximately 160 patients. The complication rate per surgical procedure varied from 3% to 34% (median 15%). There were two complications in complication-affected patients. In the analyzed papers, an average of 946 surgical procedures were performed. The incidence of unplanned surgeries in all patients varied from 19% to 144% (median 53%). The percentage of unplanned surgeries for all surgeries was 8% (3%-36%). The ratio of planned to unplanned surgeries was 11.6% (1.8%-33.9%). The most frequent complications were implant-related (61%) and
Table 7 Total number of complications divided into wound-related, implant-related, alignment and surgical/medical related

| Ref. | Total No. of complications | Wound complications | | | Implant complications | | | Alignment complications | | | Surgical or medical complications |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
|      |                             | total/infection     | n | % | mechanical complication | n | % |                          | n | % |                          |
| TGR  |                             | total/infection     | n | % | mechanical complication | n | % |                          | n | % |                          |
| Bess et al [15], 2010           | 171 | 34 | 20 | 105 | 61 | 10 | 6 | 22 | 13 |                      |
| Du et al [16], 2020            | 49  | 19 | 39 | 13  | 27 | 9  | 18 | 8  | 16 |                      |
| Andras et al [13], 2015        | 32  | 24 | 75 | 28  | 75 | 8  | 25 |    |    |                      |
| Myung et al [17], 2014         | 64  | 64 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Arandi et al [18], 2014        | 146 | 146| 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Liang et al [19], 2015         | 42  | 5  | 12 | 25  | 60 | 4  | 10 | 8  | 19 |                      |
| Ramirez et al [20], 2020       | 92  | 49 | 53 | 30  | 33 | 13 | 14 |    |    |                      |
| Yamauchi et al [21], 2014      | 44  | 44 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Pow-Kochert et al [22], 2016   | 29  | 16 | 55 | 13  | 45 |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Kabirian et al [23], 2014      | 70  | 70 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Hosseini et al [24], 2018      | 134 | 134| 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Bachabi et al [11], 2020       | 45  | 7  | 16 | 28  | 62 | 2  | 4  | 8  | 18 |                      |
| Luhmann et al [14], 2017       | 26  | 9  | 35 | 11  | 42 |    |    | 6  | 23 |                      |
| Akbarnia et al [10], 2014      | 25  | 4  | 16 | 13  | 52 |    |    | 8  | 32 |                      |
| Harris et al [8], 2020         | 264 | 264| 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Helenius et al [9], 2018       | 216 | 40 | 19 | 127 | 59 | 49 | 23 |    |    |                      |
| VEPTR                         |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Bachabi et al [11], 2020       | 26  | 9  | 35 | 15  | 58 | 2  | 8  |    |    |                      |
| Crews et al [27], 2018         | 26  | 26 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Murphy et al [28], 2016        | 57  | 16 | 28 | 28  | 49 |    |    | 13 | 23 |                      |
| Gadepalli et al [26], 2011     | 25  | 6  | 24 | 3   | 12 |    |    | 16 | 64 |                      |
| Berger-Groch et al [29], 2020  | 24  | 1  | 4  | 2   | 8  | 21 | 88 |    |    |                      |
| Hasler et al [30], 2010        | 31  | 16 | 52 | 7   | 23 | 7  | 23 | 1  | 3  |                      |
| Latalski et al [31], 2011      | 15  | 1  | 7  | 7   | 47 | 1  | 7  | 6  | 40 |                      |
| Hell, et al [32], 2005         | 3   | 1  | 33 | 1   | 33 |    |    | 1  | 33 |                      |
| Garg et al [33], 2014          | 34  | 34 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
| Waldhausen et al [34], 2016    | 37  | 12 | 32 | 21  | 57 |    |    | 4  | 11 |                      |
| Striano et al [35], 2011       | 47  | 47 | 100|    |    |    |    |    |    |                      |
Complications in surgeries for early-onset scoliosis

Latalski M et al. 

TGR: Traditional growing rods; VEPTR: Vertical expandable prosthetic titanium ribs; MCGR: Magnetically controlled growing rods.

wound-related (27%), while medical complications and alignments accounted for 19% and 8%, respectively. The most concerning problem related to TGRs is the high complication rate. The risks for implant failure, infections, and wound healing problems are significantly increased as a consequence of the repeated lengthening procedures and an unfused spine. If rod breakage or screw displacement occurs, revision surgeries are indicated to change the rod or extend the instrumented segments. Additionally, repeated general anesthesia can pose a threat to mental health. Adequate informed consent and close follow-ups are necessary.

VEPTR was developed for patients with thoracic insufficiency syndrome (TIS), but it is sometimes indicated for individuals with EOS who are at risk of secondary TIS[54, 55]. The complication rate per patient was as high as 125% (17%-226%) with a 9% rate per surgical procedure (7%-18%). Such a discrepancy is very confusing. Garg et al[37] identified only wound complications following VEPTR implant or revision surgeries. If so, adding implant, alignment, and medical-related complications, the final percentage of complications should be expected at a much higher level. On the other hand, Crews et al[27] analyzed wound, implant, and general complications at the level of 17%. The most frequent complications were implant-related 48%, and wound-related 33%, while medical complications and alignments accounted for 23% and 11%, respectively. which limits their applications. In the analyzed papers, an average of 251 surgical procedures were performed. The percentage of unplanned surgeries in all patients varied from 39% to 160% (median 60%). The percentage of unplanned...
MCGRs were introduced by Takaso et al.[56] in 1998 as remote-controlled growing-rod spinal instrumentation. The system did not require open lengthening as TGRs did, and the effect could instead be achieved by external remote control without repeated anesthesia. The complication rate of the magnetically controlled growing rod technique per patient varied from 36% to 100% (median 55%). In this group of patients, the distribution of complications is fairly homogeneous. Only Akbarnia et al.[10] described such a high level of complications while omitting wound-related and alignment problems. The complication rate per surgical procedure varied from 20% to 75% (median 31%). In the analyzed papers, an average of 44 surgical procedures were performed. The percentage of unplanned surgeries in all patients varied from 23% to 79% (median 43%). The percentage of unplanned surgeries in all surgeries was 30% (11%-34%). The ratio of planned to unplanned surgeries was 2.3 (1.3-3.8). The most frequently occurring complication was implant-related – 55%, then general (25%), wound (14%), and alignment (10%). La Rosa et al.[57] stated that MCGRs can prevent surgical scarring, surgical site infections, and psychological distress, which occur in patients with TGRs and VEPTR due to the multiple surgeries. The decreased rate of infections and wound healing problems in patients who received MCGRs is of great benefit to patients. However, Aslan et al.[58] used psychosocial tools to compare the mental state of patients receiving MCGRs and TGRs. He affirmed that if the patient noticed benefit from the growing rods, and did not experience major complications, the non-invasiveness of the lengthening procedures did not show an advantage on the patients’ psychosocial state. Besides, although MCGRs were associated with a lower rate of infections [both deep and superficial], they were associated with a significantly increased risk of metalwork problems and unplanned revisions[59].
The Shilla technique guides spinal growth towards a normal alignment[60]. The technique first corrects the apical deformity towards a neutral alignment. Then the upper and lower growth guidance portions extend into the distal and proximal areas of the curve, using special screws and caps, allowing the rod to slide with growth in a longitudinal direction. Multiple open lengthening surgeries are avoided, as in MCGRs. The complication rate was as high as 111% of the patients (39%-192%), and the complication rate per surgical procedure was 54%. Haapala et al.[12] showed the fewest complications - 39%. The remaining authors assessed the number of complications at a similar level. The most frequently appearing complications were implant-related (65%). Wound-related and alignment problems were 16% and 18%, respectively. General complications were only 5%. The percentage of unplanned surgeries in all patients varied from 15% to 181% (median 105%). The percentage of unplanned surgeries to all surgeries was 33% (11%-64%). The ratio of planned to unplanned surgeries was 1.8 (0.6-8.5). Luhmann et al.[14] found that the Shilla growth guidance system compared favorably with TGRs in terms of the degree of correction of the major curve, spinal length, and growth, and the maintenance of the sagittal alignment. Looking at these data the benefits are not so obvious. Similar to MCGR and TGR, the SGGS is associated with a very high rate of implant-related complications, which usually results in revision surgery. Additionally, for patients with great growth potential, the distal and proximal screws can slide off the rod, requiring the rods to be changed.

EOS surgery has a varying but high rate of complications. Based on this review of 40 papers, 3249 cases, and 15037 surgical procedures, the most-frequent implant complications (total 54%), the general, wound, and alignment were 17%, 15%, and 12%, respectively. These data are simplified and certainly underestimated, because of the reasons described earlier. The rate of complications might have been higher than reported, as some authors did not report every type of complication. Due to complications, 54% of the patients required unplanned surgeries, which equated to 15% of all surgeries.

The long-term risks of EOS surgery have not yet been reported on in research. There is a lack of papers with homogenous cases, long-term follow-up, all revision surgeries, and complication data.

One would expect that successful treatment which encourages the growth of the spine and chest would lead to favorable outcomes in patients with early-onset idiopathic scoliosis. But it is not unambiguous with patients with, e.g., progressive neuromuscular conditions such as congenital muscular dystrophies and spinal muscular atrophy. Surgery can effect spinal growth with expandable instrumentation, but worsening muscle weakness can negate the positive effects of growth-friendly procedures[2]. Tsirikos et al.[61] showed that the life expectancy of patients with cerebral palsy and other neurogenic deformities subjected to deformation correction does not change, but only an additional source of data such as the number of days in the intensive care unit after surgery, and the presence of severe preoperative thoracic hyperkyphosis, were the only factors affecting survival rates.

As highlighted by Hawes[62], the complexity of spinal surgery is reflected in the diversity of complications which might occur months or even years later. Given the time delay and difficulty in diagnosis, it is likely that some of the events are not recognized as surgical complications. Therefore, clear uniformity of definitions and the carelessness of the surgeon are important in assessing patient follow-up and treatment outcomes.

**CONCLUSION**

The literature concerning the definitions, collection, and interpretation of data regarding EOS surgery complications is often difficult to interpret. This causes problems in the comparison, analysis, and improvement of spine surgery practice. Additionally, this observation indicates that data on the incidence of complications can be underestimated and should be interpreted with caution. Awareness of the high rate of complications of EOS surgery is crucial, and an optimal strategy for prevention should become a priority.
ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

Research background
The treatment for early-onset scoliosis (EOS) remains a great challenge for pediatric orthopedics. The treatment goals for EOS, regardless of the diagnosis, are the same: minimizing spinal deformity while maximizing thoracic volume and pulmonary function. When conservative treatment is ineffective, the option is surgery.

Research motivation
Different surgical techniques have different advantages and drawbacks. Those most often used are traditional growing rods (TGR), vertical expandable prosthetic titanium ribs (VEPTR), magnetically controlled growing rods (MCGR), and the Shilla growth guidance system (SGGS). Repeated surgeries and complications are two major concerns in EOS management.

Research objectives
The aim of the study was to review the current literature to assess the safety of EOS surgical treatment in terms of the rate of complications and unplanned surgeries.

Research methods
The systematic review was conducted according to the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. In January 2021, a search of three electronic medical databases (PubMed, the Cochrane Library, and Embase) was performed by three independent authors. We combined the terms: “early-onset scoliosis” OR “eos” OR “juvenile scoliosis” OR “infantile scoliosis” OR “tgr” OR “veptr” OR “MCGR” OR “Shilla” OR “growth-friendly” AND “complication”.

Research results
EOS surgery has a varying but high rate of complications. The most frequent complications were categorized as implant, general, wound and alignment. The rate of complications might have been even higher than reported, as some authors do not report all types of complications.

Research conclusions
The literature concerning the definitions, collection, and interpretation of data regarding EOS surgery complications is often difficult to interpret. This creates problems in the comparison, analysis, and improvement of spine surgery practice. Awareness of the high rate of complications of EOS surgery is crucial, and an optimal strategy for prevention should become a priority.

Research perspectives
This observation indicates that data on the incidence of complications can be underestimated, and should be interpreted with caution. Further studies are needed to confirm the study results, especially concerning longitudinal data.

REFERENCES
1. Scoliosis Research Society. Early Onset Scoliosis Consensus Statement. Available from: https://www.srs.org/about-srs/quality-and-safety/position-statements/early-onset-scoliosis-consensus-statement
2. Karol LA. The Natural History of Early-onset Scoliosis. J Pediatr Orthop 2019; 39: S38-S43 [PMID: 31169646 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000001351]
3. Scott JC, Morgan TH. The natural history and prognosis of infantile idiopathic scoliosis. J Bone Joint Surg Br 1955; 37-B: 400-413 [PMID: 13252048 DOI: 10.1302/0301-620X.37B3.400]
4. Johari J, Sharifudin MA, Ab Rahman A, Omar AS, Abdullah AT, Nor S, Lam WC, Yusof MI. Relationship between pulmonary function and degree of spinal deformity, location of apical vertebrae and age among adolescent idiopathic scoliosis patients. Singapore Med J 2016; 57: 33-38 [PMID: 26831315 DOI: 10.11622/smedj.2016009]
5. Zhang YB, Zhang JG. Treatment of early-onset scoliosis: techniques, indications, and complications. Chin Med J (Engl) 2020; 133: 351-357 [PMID: 31904727 DOI: 10.1097/CMJ.0000000000000614]
6. Weiss HR, Bess S, Wong MS, Patel V, Goodall D, Burger E. Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis - to operate or not? Patient Saf Surg 2008; 2: 25 [PMID: 18826571 DOI: 10.1186/1754-9493-2-25]
7. Liberati A, Altman DG, Tetzlaff J, Mulrow C, Gøtzsche PC, Ioannidis JP, Clarke M, Devereaux PJ,
Kleijnen J, Moher D. The PRISMA statement for reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses of studies that evaluate healthcare interventions: explanation and elaboration. *BMJ* 2009; 339: b2700 [PMID: 19622552 DOI: 10.1136/bmj.b2700]

8 Harris L, Andras LM, Mundis GM, Sponseller PD, Emans JB; Growing Spine Study Group, Skaggs DL. Five or more proximal anchors and including upper end vertebra protects against reoperation in distraction-based growing rods. *Spine Deform* 2020; 8: 781-786 [PMID: 32125653 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2020.09.004-s]

9 Helenius JJ, Oksanen HM, McClung A, Pavlek JB, Yazici M, Sponseller PD, Emans JB, Sánchez Pérez-Grueso FJ, Thompson GH, Johnston C, Shah SA, Akbarnia BA. Outcomes of growing rod surgery for severe compared with moderate early-onset scoliosis: a matched comparative study. *Bone Joint J* 2018; 100-B: 772-779 [PMID: 29855249 DOI: 10.1302/0301-620X.100B8.20171490.R1]

10 Akbarnia BA, Pavlek JB, Cheung KM, Demirkan G, Elsebaie H, Emans JB, Johnston CE, Mundis GM, Noordeen H, Skaggs DL, Sponseller PD, Thompson GH, Yaszay B, Yazici M; Growing Spine Study Group. Traditional Growing Rods Versus Magnetically Controlled Growing Rods for the Surgical Treatment of Early-Onset Scoliosis: A Case-Matched 2-Year Study. *Spine Deform* 2014; 2: 493-497 [PMID: 27927412 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2014.09.050]

11 Bachabi M, McClung A, Pavlek JB, El Hawary R, Thompson GH, Smith JT, Vitale MG, Akbarnia BA, Sponseller PD; Children’s Spine Study Group; Growing Spine Study Group. Idiopathic Early-onset Scoliosis: Growing Rods Versus Vertically Expandable Prosthetic Titanium Ribs at 5-year Follow-up. *J Pediatr Orthop* 2020; 40: 142-148 [PMID: 32028476 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000001202]

12 Haapala H, Saarinen AJ, Salonen A, Helenius I. Shilla Growth Guidance Compared With Magnetically Controlled Growing Rods in the Treatment of Neuromuscular and Syndromic Early-onset Scoliosis. *Spine (Phila Pa 1976)* 2020; 45: E1604-E1614 [PMID: 32858743 DOI: 10.1097/BRS.0000000000003654]

13 Andras LM, Joiner ER, McCarthy RE, McCullough L, Luhmann SJ, Sponseller PD, Emans JB, Barrett KK, Skaggs DL; Growing Spine Study Group. Growing Rods Versus Shilla Growth Guidance: Better Cobb Angle Correction and T1-S1 Length Increase But More Surgeries. *Spine Deform* 2015; 3: 246-252 [PMID: 27927466 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2014.11.005]

14 Luhmann SJ, Smith JC, McClung A, McCullough FL, McCarthy RE, Thompson GH; Growing Spine Study Group. Radiographic Outcomes of Shilla Growth Guidance System and Traditional Growing Rods Through Definitive Treatment. *Spine Deform* 2017; 5: 277-282 [PMID: 28622904 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2017.01.011]

15 Bess S, Akbarnia BA, Thompson GH, Sponseller PD, Shah SA, El Sebaie H, Boachie-Adjei O, Karlin LJ, Canale S, Poe-Kochert C, Skaggs DL; Complications of growing-rod treatment for early-onset scoliosis: analysis of one hundred and forty patients. *J Bone Joint Surg Am* 2016; 98: 2533-2543 [PMID: 28089912 DOI: 10.2106/JBJS.L.01471]

16 Du JY, Poe-Kochert C, Thompson GH, Hardesty CK, Pavlek JB, Flynn JM, Emans JB; Pediatric Spine Study Group. Risk Factors for Reoperation Following Final Fusion After the Treatment of Early-Onset Scoliosis with Traditional Growing Rods. *J Bone Joint Surg Am* 2020; 102: 1672-1678 [PMID: 33027120 DOI: 10.2106/JBJS.20.00312]

17 Myung KS, Skaggs DL, Johnston CE, Akbarnia BA; Growing Spine Study Group. The Use of Pedicle Screws in Children 10 Years of Age and Younger With Growing Rods. *Spine Deform* 2014; 2: 471-474 [PMID: 27927408 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2014.07.002]

18 Arandi NR, Pavlek JB, Kabirian N, Thompson GH, Emans JB, Flynn JM, Dormans JP, Akbarnia BA; Growing Spine Study Group. Do Thoracolumbar/Lumbar Curves Respond Differently to Growing Rod Surgery Compared With Thoracic Curves? *Spine Deform* 2014; 2: 489-492 [PMID: 27927409 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2014.04.002]

19 Liang J, Li S, Xu D, Zhuang Q, Ren Z, Chen X, Gao N. Risk factors for predicting complications associated with growing rod surgery for early-onset scoliosis. *Clin Neurol Neurosurg* 2015; 136: 15-19 [PMID: 26056806 DOI: 10.1016/j.clineuro.2015.05.026]

20 Ramirez N, Olivella G, Rodriguez O, Marerro P, Smith J, Garg S, Vitale M, St Hilaire T, Betz R. Incidence of complications in the management of non-ambulatory neuromuscular early-onset scoliosis with a rib-based growing system: high- versus low-tone patients. *J Orthop Surg Traumatol* 2020; 30: 621-627 [PMID: 31863270 DOI: 10.1016/j.jostmos.2019.09.026.140]

21 Yamaguchi KT Jr, Skaggs DL, Mansour S, Myung KS, Yazici M, Johnston C, Thompson G, Sponseller P, Akbarnia BA, Vitale MG; Growing Spine Study Group. Are Rib Versus Spine Anchors Protective Against Breakage of Growing Rods? *Spine Deform* 2014; 2: 489-492 [PMID: 27927411 DOI: 10.1016/j.spdeform.2014.08.007]

22 Poe-Kochert C, Shannon C, Pavlek JB, Thompson GH, Hardesty CK, Marks DS, Akbarnia BA, McCarthy RE, Emans JB. Final Fusion After Growing-Rod Treatment for Early Onset Scoliosis: Is It Really Final? *J Bone Joint Surg Am* 2016; 98: 1913-1917 [PMID: 27852908 DOI: 10.2106/JBJS.15.01334]

23 Kabirian N, Akbarnia BA, Pavlek JB, Alam M, Mundis GM Jr, Acacio R, Thompson GH, Marks DS, Gardner A, Sponseller PD, Skaggs DL; Growing Spine Study Group. Deep Surgical Site Infection Following 2344 Growing-Rod Procedures for Early-Onset Scoliosis: Risk Factors and Clinical Consequences. *J Bone Joint Surg Am* 2014; 96: e128 [PMID: 25100781 DOI: 10.2106/JBJS.M.00618]
Latalski M et al. Complications in surgeries for early-onset scoliosis

24 Hosseini P, Akbarnia BA, Nguyen S, Pawelek J, Emans J, Sturm PF, Sponseller PD: Growing Spine Study Group. Construct Levels to Anchored Levels Ratio and Rod Diameter Are Associated With Implant-Related Complications in Traditional Growing Rods. *Spine Deform* 2018; 6: 320-326 [PMID: 29733144 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2017.11.004]

25 Johnston CE, McClung AM, Thompson GH, Poe-Kochert C, Sanders JO: Growing Spine Study Group. Comparison of Growing Rod Instrumentation Versus Serial Cast Treatment for Early-Onset Scoliosis. *Spine Deform* 2013; 1: 339-342 [PMID: 23927359 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2013.05.006]

26 Gadepalli SK, Hirschel RB, Tsai WC, Caird MS, Vanderhave KL, Strouse PJ, Drongowski RA, Farley FA. Vertical expandable prosthetic titanium rib device insertion: does it improve pulmonary function? *J Pediatr Surg* 2011; 46: 77-80 [PMID: 21238644 DOI: 10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2010.09.070]

27 Crews JD, Mina M, Johnson E, Guillen J, Simmons J, Joshi A. Risk Factors for Surgical Site Infections Following Vertical Expandable Prosthetic Titanium Rib (VEPTR) Surgery in Children. *Spine Deform* 2018; 6: 791-796 [PMID: 30348360 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2018.03.016]

28 Murphy RF, Moisan A, Kelly DM, Warner WC Jr, Jones TL, Sawyer JR. Use of Vertical Expandable Prosthetic Titanium Rib (VEPTR) in the Treatment of Congenital Scoliosis Without Fused Ribs. *J Pediatr Orthop* 2016; 36: 329-335 [PMID: 25887832 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000000460]

29 Berger-Groch J, Weiser L, Kunkel POS, Stuecker R, Jungelsbult OD. Vertical Expandable Rib-based Distraction Device for Correction of Congenital Scoliosis in Children of 3 Years of Age or Younger: A Preliminary Report. *J Pediatr Orthop* 2020; 40: e728-e733 [PMID: 32467420 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000001597]

30 Hasler CC, Mehrkens A, Hefti F. Efficacy and safety of VEPTR instrumentation for progressive spine deformities in young children without rib fusions. *Eur Spine J* 2010; 19: 400-408 [PMID: 20041270 DOI: 10.1007/s00586-009-1253-9]

31 Latalski M, Fatyga M, Gregosiewicz A. Problems and complications in VEPTR-based treatment. *Ortop Traumatol Rehabil* 2011; 13: 449-455 [PMID: 22147434 DOI: 10.5604/15093492.967222]

32 Hell AK, Campbell RM, Hefti F. The vertical expandable prosthetic titanium rib implant for the treatment of thoracic insufficiency syndrome associated with congenital and neuromuscular scoliosis in young children. *J Pediatr Orthop B* 2005; 14: 287-293 [PMID: 15931035 DOI: 10.1097/01202412-200507000-00011]

33 Garg S, LaGreca J, St Hilaire T, Gao D, Glotzbecker M, Li Y, Smith JT, Flynn J. Wound complications of vertical expandable prosthetic titanium rib incisions. *Spine (Phila Pa 1976)* 2014; 39: E777-E781 [PMID: 24732382 DOI: 10.1097/BRS.0000000000000343]

34 Waldhausen JH, Redding G, White K, Song K. Complications in using the vertical expandable prosthetic titanium rib (VEPTR) in children. *J Pediatr Surg* 2016; 51: 1747-1750 [PMID: 27397045 DOI: 10.1016/j.jpedsurg.2016.06.014]

35 Striano BM, Refakis CA, Anari JB, Campbell RM, Flynn JM. Site-specific Surgical Site Infection Rates for Rib-based Distraction. *J Pediatr Orthop* 2019; 39: e698-e702 [PMID: 31503227 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000002165]

36 Lucas G, Bollini G, Jouve JL, de Gauzy JS, Lascombes P, Journeau P, Karger C, Mallet E, Moisan A, Kelly DM, Warner WC Jr, Jones TL, Sawyer JR. Use of Vertical Expandable Prosthetic Titanium Rib Device for Correction of Congenital Scoliosis in Children of 3 Years of Age or Younger: A Preliminary Report. *J Pediatr Orthop* 2020; 40: e728-e733 [PMID: 32467420 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000001597]

37 Studer D, Heidt C, Büchler P, Hasler CC. Treatment of early onset spinal deformities with magnetically controlled growing rods: a single centre experience of 30 cases. *J Child Orthop* 2019; 13: 196-205 [PMID: 30966745 DOI: 10.1302/1863-2548.13.180203]

38 Subramanian T, Ahmad A, Mardare DM, Kiesser DC, Mayers D, Nnadi C. A six-year observational study of 31 children with early-onset scoliosis treated using magnetically controlled growing rods with a minimum follow-up of two years. *Bone Joint J* 2018; 100-B: 1187-1200 [PMID: 30168755 DOI: 10.1302/0301-620X.BJ0-2018-0031.R2]

39 Urbański W, Tucker S, Ember T, Nadarajah R. Single vs dual rod constructs in early onset scoliosis treated with magnetically controlled growing rods. *Adv Clin Exp Med* 2020; 29: 1169-1174 [PMID: 33064377 DOI: 10.17219/acem/12629]

40 Obid P, Yu K, Cheung K, Kwan K, Ruf M, Cheung JPY. Magnetically controlled growing rods in early onset scoliosis: radiological results, outcome, and complications in a series of 22 patients. *Arch Orthop Trauma Surg* 2021; 141: 1163-1174 [PMID: 32556642 DOI: 10.1007/s00402-020-03518-2]

41 Lampe LP, Schulze Bövingloh A, Goshgeger G, Schulte TL, Lange T. Magnetically Controlled Growing Rods in Treatment of Early-Onset Scoliosis: A Single Center Study With a Minimum of 2-Year-Follow up and Preliminary Results After Converting Surgery. *Spine (Phila Pa 1976)* 2019; 44: 1201-1210 [PMID: 30985569 DOI: 10.1097/BRS.0000000000003048]
Nazareth A, Skaggs DL, Illingworth KD, Parent S, Shah SA, Sanders JO, Andras LM; Growing Spine Study Group. Growing guidance constructs with apical fusion and sliding pedicle screws (SHILLA) results in approximately 1/3rd of normal T1-S1 growth. Spine Deform 2020; 8: 531-535

Miękisik G, Kolotowski K, Menartowicz P, Oleksik Z, Kotulski D, Potacek T, Repko M, Filipović M, Danielewicz A, Fatyga M, Latalski M. The titanium-made growth-guidance technique for early-onset scoliosis at minimum 2-year follow-up: A prospective multicenter study. Adv Clin Exp Med 2019; 28: 1073-1077 [PMID: 31237121 DOI: 10.17219/acem/102269]

McCarthy RE, Luhmann S, Lenke L, McCullough FL. The Shilla growth guidance technique for early-onset spinal deformities at 2-year follow-up: a preliminary report. J Pediatr Orthr 2014; 34: 1-7 [PMID: 23934092 DOI: 10.1097/PO.0b013e318299292c]

McCarthy RE, McCullough FL. Shilla Growth Guidance for Early-Onset Scoliosis: Results After a Minimum of Five Years of Follow-up. J Bone Joint Surg Am 2015; 97: 1578-1584 [PMID: 26446065 DOI: 10.2106/JBJS.N.01083]

Smith JT, Johnston C, Skaggs D, Flynn J, Vitale M. A New Classification System to Report Complications in Growing Spine Surgery: A Multicenter Consensus Study. J Pediatr Orthr 2015; 35: 798-803 [PMID: 25575362 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000000386]

Weiss HR, Goodall D. Rate of complications in scoliosis surgery - a systematic review of the Pub Med literature. Scoliosis 2008; 3: 9 [PMID: 18681956 DOI: 10.1186/1746-1716-3-9]

Watanabe K, Uno K, Suzuki T, Kawakami N, Tsuji T, Yanagida H, Ito M, Hirano T, Yamazaki K, Minami S, Kotani T, Taniechii H, Imagama S, Takeshita K, Yamamoto T, Matsunoto M. Risk factors for complications associated with growing-rod surgery for early-onset scoliosis. Spine (Phila Pa 1976) 2013; 38: E64-E68 [PMID: 23706880 DOI: 10.1097/BRS.0b013e318288671a]

Upasani VV, Parvaresh KC, Pawelek JB, Miller PE, Thompson GH, Skaggs DL, Emans JB, Glotzbecker MP; Growing Spine Study Group. Age at Initiation and Deformity Magnitude Influence Complication Rates of Surgical Treatment With Traditional Growing Rods in Early-Onset Scoliosis. Spine Deform 2016; 4: 344-350 [PMID: 27927491 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2016.04.002]

Danielewicz A, Wójciak M, Sawicki J, Dresler S, Sowa I, Latalski M. Comparison of Different Surgical Systems for Treatment of Early-onset Scoliosis in the Context of Release of Titanium Ions. Spine (Phila Pa 1976) 2021; 46: E594-E601 [PMID: 33290378 DOI: 10.1097/BRS.0000000000001846]

Hardesty CK, Huang RP, El-Hawary R, Samdani A, Hermida PB, Bus T, Baloghu MB, Gurd D, Pawelek J, McCarthy R, Zhu F, Luhmann S. Growing Spine Committee of the Scoliosis Research Society. Early-Onset Scoliosis: Updated Treatment Techniques and Results. Spine Deform 2018; 6: 467-472 [PMID: 29889621 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2017.12.012]

Campbell RM Jr, Adcox BM, Smith MD, Simmons JW 3rd, Cofer BR, Inscorre SC, Grohman C. The effect of mid-thoracic VEPTR opening wedge thoracostomy on cervical tilt associated with congenital thoracic scoliosis in patients with thoracic insufficiency syndrome. Spine (Phila Pa 1976) 2007; 32: 2171-2177 [PMID: 17873807 DOI: 10.1097/01.brs.0000291426.1525c]

El-Hawary R, Kadhim M, Vitale M, Smith J, Samdani A, Flynn JM; Children’s Spine Study Group. VEPTR Implantation to Treat Children With Early-Onset Scoliosis Without Rib Abnormalities: Early Results From a Prospective Multicenter Study. J Pediatr Orthr 2017; 37: e599-e605 [PMID: 28141683 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000000943]

Takaso M, Moriya H, Kitahara H, Minami S, Takahashi K, Yamagata M, Otsuka Y, Nakata Y, Inoue M. New remote-controlled growing-rod spinal instrumentation possibly applicable for scoliosis in young children. J Orthop Sci 1998; 3: 336-340 [PMID: 9811986 DOI: 10.1007/bf0077600560]

La Rosa G, Oggiano L, Ruzzini L. Magnetically Controlled Growing Rods for the Management of Early-onset Scoliosis: A Preliminary Report. J Pediatr Orthr 2017; 37: 79-85 [PMID: 26192879 DOI: 10.1097/BPO.0000000000000597]

Aslan C, Olgun ZD, Erdas ES, Ozusta S, Demirkiran G, Unal F, Yaziçi M. Psychological Profile of Children Who Require Repetitive Surgical Procedures for Early Onset Scoliosis: Is a Poorer Quality of Life the Cost of a Straighter Spine? Spine Deform 2017; 5: 334-341 [PMID: 28882351 DOI: 10.1016/j.jspd.2017.03.007]

Teoh KH, Winson DM, James SH, Jones A, Howes J, Davies PR, Ahuja S. Do magnetic growing rods have lower complication rates compared with conventional growing rods? Spine J 2016; 16: S40-S44 [PMID: 26850175 DOI: 10.1016/j.spinee.2015.12.009]

McCarthy RE, Sucato D, Turner JL, Zhang H, Henson MA, McCarthy K. Shilla growing rods in a caprine animal model: a pilot study. Clin Orthop Relat Res 2010; 468: 705-710 [PMID: 19693636 DOI: 10.1007/s11999-009-0128-y]

Tsirikos AI, Chang WN, Dabney KW, Miller F, Glutting J. Life expectancy in pediatric patients with cerebral palsy and neuromuscular scoliosis who underwent spinal fusion. Dev Med Child Neurol 2003; 45: 677-682 [PMID: 14515939 DOI: 10.1017/s0012162020001000269]

Hawes M. Impact of spine surgery on signs and symptoms of spinal deformity. Pediatr Rehabil 2006; 9: 318-339 [PMID: 17111548 DOI: 10.1080/13638490500402264]
