Subtrochanteric Fracture of the Femur in the Elderly Osteoporotic Bone: Long Proximal Femoral Nail is the best Treatment Option: In Rural Population - Case Series

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Abstract

Sub-trochanteric fractures involve the upper part of femur between the lesser trochanter and the isthmic region. Fractures in this area are complex and treatment is bothersome to both the patient and the orthopaedic surgeon. These fractures are common among elderly adults with coexisting low bone mineral density due to osteoporosis. Plates, dynamic hip screw, dynamic condylar screw, proximal femoral locking compression plate, intramedullary nail, cephalo medullary nail, proximal short and long femoral nail (PLFN) are the transformational procedures available in which the PLFN is being preferred due to stable fixation.\textsuperscript{1}

10 patients were enrolled in the study.\textsuperscript{2} The patients were assessed using modified Harris hip scoring postoperatively at one, three, six month and one year from the date of surgery. Descriptive statistics was done in the MS office excel 2010. The encountered complications are non union (n=1), postoperative delirium (n=0) and a case of varus deformity (n=1). The biomechanical properties and minimally invasive fixation technique inspite of good of reduction the LPFN takes lower mean duration of surgery, lower rate of reoperation has the least complications among the other fixation techniques.

Background: Long proximal femoral nail has been the standard treatment for subtrochanteric fractures. However there are many fixation implants in the field of traumatology.\textsuperscript{1} Especially in elderly osteoporotic bone fractures long proximal femoral nail achieved good functional outcome with least complications compared to other implants which led to high failure rates.

Methods: A Series of eleven cases of osteoporotic subtrochanteric fractures are operated with long proximal femoral nail. One patient lost follow up. The patients are followed (at one, three, six month and one year) at regular intervals. Results were assessed using modified harris hip scoring system.

Results: Total ten patients were taken for study were followed by minimum six months and maximum of one year. Clinical outcome was rated as per modified harris hip score. Excellent – 60 %, Good – 20 %, Fair –
Conclusion: The surgical management of subtrochanteric fracture with long proximal femoral nail provides stable fixation with moderate pain free early mobilization and good outcome in osteoporotic patients with limited complications.

Keywords: Long proximal femoral nail, osteoporosis, subtrochanteric fracture, modified harris hip scoring system.

Introduction
Sub-trochanteric fractures involve the upper part of femur between the lesser trochanter and the isthmic region. Fractures in this area are complex and treatment is bothersome to both the patient and the orthopaedic surgeon. These fractures are common among elderly adults with coexisting low bone mineral density due to osteoporosis. Since the bone is inherently weak, trivial trauma like self fall is the most common mode of injury. The complication in these fractures are increased mortality and morbidity, implant or fixation failure, screw pullout especially in osteoporosis, non-union, penetration of the screw in to hip and associated systemic diseases like diabetes, hypertension and other illness.

Unique Anatomy and Biomechanics
- Area of greater stress concentration – muscle insertion – Deforming force
- Classical deformity

| Deformity       | Provoking muscle                  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Flexion         | Iliopsoas                         |
| External rotation | Short external rotators           |
| Abduction       | Gluteus medius, Gluteus minimus   |
| Adductors       | Thigh Adductors                   |
| Shortening      | Quadriceps and Hamstring          |

- Predominant – Cortical bone – precarious vascularisation
- Complex fracture – medial support failure – fixation failure – reoperation.

Classification System
- Boyd and Griffin (1949)¹
- Fielding an Magleaito (1966)
- Russell Taylor
- AO classification
- Seinsheimer classification
- MCG classification

We followed Seinsheimer’s classification. The most used and practical system which describes number of fracture fragments, involvement of medial and lateral cortex.

Treatment Modalities
- Non Surgical: Recently non surgical management is exceptionally allowed in Patients with serious ill clinical co-morbidities.
- Surgical: Evolution of implants

Extra Medullary Implants
1) Dynamic hip screw – unsatisfactory results in 70% of patients
2) Blade plate Causes local evascularisation, infection, pseudo arthrosis, osteosynthesis failure.
3) DCS Causes local evascularisation, infection, pseudo arthrosis, osteosynthesis failure.
4) PF – LCP – causes shortening and viscous consolidation in external rotation.

Intra Medullary Implants
1) IM Nail osteosynthesis failure
2) Gamma nail due to varus reduction
3) Short PFN – causes refracture, post operative thigh pain
4) Long PFN- is the best implant of choice available for speedy recovery, low non union rate, limited complications, good outcome.

Blade Plates, dynamic hip screw, dynamic condylar screw, proximal femoral locking compression plate, intramedullary nail, gamma nail, proximal short and long femoral nail (PLFN) are the transformational procedures available in which the PLFN is being preferred due to stable fixation. As the proximal segment is small, internal fixation is difficult and deformational forces disrupt alignment of the fragments. All the
operative procedures aims at maintaining the length and avoiding the varus deformity of the affected limb with abductor muscle power at early. However in osteoporotic elderly women, multidisciplinary approach is preferred.

![DCS Implant Breakage](image1)

**Materials and Methods**

It is a prospective descriptive study conducted in the department of orthopaedics, RMMCH from May 2016 to August 2018 after obtaining ethical committee clearance and informed consent, 10 patients were enrolled in the study using simple random sampling. Patient with subtrochanteric fracture, osteoporosis and duration less than 14 days are included while those with other systemic comorbidities, medically unfit for surgery, any other fractures in the ipsilateral limb and the girdle, age less than 55 years are excluded. The patients were assessed using modified Harris hip scoring postoperatively at one, three, six month and one year. Descriptive statistics was done in the MS office excel 2010.

![Short PFN - Implant Breakage with Refracture](image2)

**Functional Outcome**

![Pre op x ray](image3)
Range of Movements

1 month post op

3 month post op

6 month post op

Extension

Flexion
Observation and Results
In our study of 10 cases majority of patients are male (n=6). The most common mode of injury is trivial fall (7) followed by fall from height (n=2) and RTA (n=1). The mean duration of hospital stay is 13 ±2 days. Out of 10 patients, one suffered from rheumatoid arthritis in which outcome is poor. The encountered complications are non union (n=1), postoperative delirium (n=0) and a case of varus deformity (n=1). For the case of non-union, through old surgical in lateral position augmentation with locking plate and bone grafting was one for additional stability and weight bearing. For the case of delirium in the postoperative period, psychiatric management with de-rotational boot was done.

Complications

Case-1
Rotation of Proximal Fragment

Case -2
Screw Pull Out
Case -3

Pre-op x ray

1 month post op

3 month post op

5 month post op

6 months post op (Non-Union)

Augmentation Plating with Bone Grafting Done

Locking Plate Augmentation

Iliac Bone Grafting
Post op X Ray

### Table-1

| Age (years) | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 55-59       | 0        | 0              |
| 60-64       | 2        | 20             |
| 65-69       | 4        | 40             |
| 70-74       | 1        | 10             |
| 75-79       | 2        | 20             |
| >80         | 1        | 10             |
| Total       | 10       | 100            |

| Sex        | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------|----------|----------------|
| Male       | 6        | 60             |
| Female     | 4        | 40             |
| Total      | 10       | 100            |

| Complication | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|----------|----------------|
| None         | 6        | 60             |
| Non union    | 1        | 10             |
| Varus deformity | 1   | 10             |
| Delirium     | 1        | 10             |
| Screw pullout| 1        | 10             |
| Shortening   | 0        | 0              |
| Z effect     | 0        | 0              |
| Total        | 10       | 100            |

### Table-2

| Classification (Seinsheimer) | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| 1                            | 0        | 0              |
| 2A                           | 0        | 0              |
| 2B                           | 0        | 0              |
| 2C                           | 2        | 20             |
| 3A                           | 3        | 30             |
| 3B                           | 4        | 40             |
| 4                            | 1        | 10             |
| 5                            | 0        | 0              |
| Total                        | 10       | 100            |

### Table-3

| Harris hip score at 1 year | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Excellent                  | 6        | 60             |
| Good                       | 2        | 20             |
| Fair                       | 1        | 10             |
| Poor                       | 1        | 10             |
| Total                      | 10       | 100            |
### Table-4

| Reduction technique | Size (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Open (mini open)    | 6        | 60              |
| Closed              | 4        | 40              |
| Total               | 10       | 100             |

#### Age (years)

- 55-59: 0.5
- 60-64: 1
- 65-69: 5
- 70-74: 1
- 75-79: 2
- >80: 1

#### Sex

- Male: 6
- Female: 4

#### Classification (Seinsheimer)

- 1: 1
- 2A: 2
- 2B: 1
- 2C: 1
- 3A: 1
- 3B: 2
- 4: 1
- 5: 1
Discussion
The osteoporotic sub-trochanteric fractures usually have a weak bone. So it is difficult to attain stable bone implant construct, thereby preventing the reduction of load on the affected extremity during the phase of healing. The main idea of treating these osteoporotic fractures is early mobilization and restoring the pre-fracture normal state. The load sharing between the bone and the implant is considered as a key role. The overall therapeutic concept of osteoporotic fractures is treatment of comorbidities, timing of operation, selection of implant and operative technique. In osteoporotic bone the main cause of failure is of fracture fixation rather than implant failure itself. The higher incidence of non-union in subtrochanteric fracture is the most common complication advocated by Delee et al is abolished in traumatology by fixation techniques. Extramedullary fixation has more complications than the intramedullary leading to the fracture union, implant failure, soft tissue damage and blood loss. In sub trochanteric fracture was first describe by Boyd and Griffin in 1949 as a variant of trochanteric fractures and noted unsuccessful fixation results. In 1966, Fielding and Magleaito simply classified subtrochanteric fractures by the lesser trochanter to the distance of the fracture. In the early 1997, proximal femoral nail as intramedullary device was introduced. In 2003, Christian Bolein et al concluded proximal femoral nail as a good miniamally invasive method for the fractures, in 2007, Lei-sheing-jiang introduced the long PFN as a reliable implant for the subtrochanteric fractures. In 2013, Calrderon et al did a study on subtrochantrantaric fracture treated with a L-PFN have a better outcomes. The L-PFN has shorter lever arm on the proximal fixation, biologically friendly fixation resulted in high union rates than closed reduction. Lei-sheing-jiang et al in his study had no complications like cut out, implant breakage, peri-prosthetic fractures. Werner et al was the first to introduce the term of “Z-effect” in the 5 of 70 cases. Boldein et al escribe reverse z effect in two cases of 55 patients. In the most recent study to evaluate the use of L-PFN is from Fogagnolo et al reported two implant failures. Simmermacher et al described technical failure after poor reduction malrotation or wrong choice of screws in 5% of the cases.

Conclusion
In the elderly osteoporotic subtrochanteric fractures with unfavourable anatomical peculiarities and origin of new implant techniques, the treatment of these fracture still remains challenging. The biomechanical properties and minimally invasive fixation technique inspite of good reduction the L-PFN takes lower duration of surgery, lower rate of reoperation, with least...
complications among the other fixation techniques.

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