Modified Lemaire Lateral Extra-articular Tenodesis in the Pediatric Patient: An Adjunct to Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction

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Abstract: Recent literature has identified a population of active adolescents aged 13 to 15 years who are at high risk for anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) graft rupture. Addressing the anterolateral complex during primary anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction has recently re-emerged in the literature, with various techniques available. This paper aims to describe a lateral extra-articular tenodesis procedure using the iliotibial band with a modified Lemaire technique. This procedure is recommended for active adolescents at a high risk of graft re-tear as an enhancement to primary anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction with soft-tissue graft.

Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears are a common injury in the pediatric population and are being recognized and treated with increasing frequency. In a meta-analysis, Wiggins et al. noted that nearly 1 in 4 young athletic patients who sustain an ACL injury and return to high-risk sports will go on to sustain another ACL injury at some point in their career. Surgical techniques to address ACL tears in growing children and adolescents have rapidly evolved to minimize the risk of growth disturbance and retear.

Addressing the anterolateral complex (ALC) during anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction (ACLR) has recently re-emerged in the literature. The ALC includes several structures: the iliotibial band (ITB), distal and proximal Kaplan’s fibers, the anterolateral ligament (ALL), and the capsular attachment of the lateral meniscus. Noyes et al. described the role of the ALL and ITB in knee rotational stability with cadaveric knee specimens. Their results showed that the ITB acts as a secondary restraint to tibial translation and internal rotation and that the ALL and ITB functioned in some knees as the primary restraint for internal rotation at high flexion angles. These results suggest that an insufficient or injured ALC puts a significant force on an ACL, especially in sports involving cutting, jumping, and pivoting.

Research regarding ITB tenodesis as a supplemental procedure to ACLR is limited and primarily involves skeletally mature patients. In an attempt to address the previously reported population of active adolescents at a high risk of graft re-tear, this paper aims to describe a lateral extra-articular tenodesis (LET) procedure using the ITB with a modified Lemaire technique to use as an enhancement to ACLR with soft-tissue graft in the high-risk athlete within the pediatric population.

Surgical Technique: Modified Lemaire ITB Tenodesis (With Video Illustration)

To begin, with the patient positioned supine and the knee in 90° of flexion, a lateral incision is performed beginning at the level of the femoral insertion of the lateral collateral ligament (LCL) and extended...
proximally for 5 cm. Dissection is taken through subcutaneous tissues to the ITB (Fig 1). A central 8-cm × 1-cm strip of ITB is harvested and left attached distally to Gerdy’s tubercle (Fig 2). Care is taken to avoid the important Kaplan’s fibers posteriorly. The ITB graft is then whipped stitched (Fig 3). After the LCL is identified, the graft is passed deep (medial) to the LCL. Intraoperative fluoroscopy (mini c-arm) is recommended to confirm positioning of a drill guide directed distal to the distal femoral physis with an anterior trajectory (to avoid convergence with the femoral socket of the ACLR) and just proximal and posterior to the femoral insertion of the LCL (Fig 4). In 30° of flexion and neutral rotation, the ITB graft is secured with an all-suture anchor (Fig 5). We currently prefer fixation with an all-suture anchor (1.3-mm DX FiberTak Suture Anchor; Arthrex, Naples, FL); however, PEEK (polyether ether ketone) or biocomposite suture anchors also may be used at the surgeon’s discretion. The ITB graft is then passed lateral to the LCL and secured to itself using a nonabsorbable #2 suture to complete the tenodesis (Fig 6). The ITB donor defect is then closed using #2 nonabsorbable sutures in an interrupted simple fashion to complete the LET (Fig 7).

Fig 1. Schematic of a lateral view of the right knee. The ITB (A) is exposed and left attached distally at Gerdy’s Tubercle (B). (ITB, iliotibial band.)

Fig 2. Schematic of a lateral view of the right knee. The ITB (A) is harvested proximally leaving the distal end attached to Gerdy’s Tubercle (B) and producing an 8-cm × 1-cm graft from the central third of the ITB (C). (ITB, iliotibial band.)

Fig 3. Schematic of a lateral view of the right knee. The proximal end of the ITB graft is whipped stitched (A). (ITB, iliotibial band.)
MODIFIED LEMAIRE TENODESIS WITH PEDIATRIC ACL

Fig 4. Anteroposterior intraoperative fluoroscopy with the knee in 30° flexion confirming the positioning of a drill guide (A) directed distal to the distal femoral physis (B) starting just proximal and posterior to the femoral insertion of the LCL. (LCL, lateral collateral ligament.)

Fig 5. Schematic of a lateral view of the right knee. Shown is the ITB graft (A) passing deep to the lateral collateral ligament (C) and anchored (represented by the X) distal to the distal femoral growth plate (B) and just proximal and posterior to the LCL femoral insertion (D). (ITB, iliotibial band; LCL, lateral collateral ligament.)

A video detailing the technique is shown in Video 1. Pearls and pitfalls and advantages and disadvantages of this adjunct technique are described in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Discussion

Previous research on anterolateral stabilization in adults has been reported with favorable outcomes. Sonnery-Cottet et al.\textsuperscript{10} compared the graft rupture rate in 3 ACLR groups: 4-strand hamstring tendon (HT), bone–patellar tendon–bone (BPTB), and HT + ALL. The combined HT and ALL graft group experienced 2.5 and 3.1 times less graft rupture compared with BPTB and 4HT, respectively at minimum 2-year follow-up.\textsuperscript{10} Marcacci et al.\textsuperscript{11} reported a 10- to 13-year follow-up on 54 patients who underwent ACLR with a similar technique. After 11 years, only 2 patients had >5 mm manual maximum side-to-side difference in laxity based on the KT-2000 arthrometer. The mean Lysholm score was 97.3, and the mean subjective score was 90.0%. Radiographic evaluation demonstrated progressive joint narrowing for 20 patients who had had concomitant medial meniscal surgery. In addition, there are 2 systematic reviews addressing the clinical outcomes of combined lateral extra-articular tenodesis and intra-articular ACLR.\textsuperscript{12,13} Results from both studies demonstrate the effectiveness of LET procedures in the elimination of high-grade pivot-shifts.

Most recently, a 2018 study prospectively compared 82 patients undergoing ACLR (BPTB autograft) with either an ITB LET or gracilis LET procedure.\textsuperscript{14} The results at a mean of 13 months follow-up showed that the ACLR with ITB LET group had no extra risk of preoperative complication or reconstruction failure compared with the gracilis LET procedure group. Revision surgery was significantly more frequent in the gracilis LET group (31.7%) compared with the ITB LET group (7.3%). As growing literature supports anterolateral stabilization and its role in preventing graft rupture in adults, this article describes a technique that can be used in young athletes undergoing ACLR who are at high risk for graft rupture.

Recently, Cordasco et al.\textsuperscript{15} reported the 2-year return to sport and reoperation rates in 324 athletes younger than 20 years of age who underwent ACLR. Surgical technique was based on skeletal age and included an all-epiphyseal technique with hamstring autograft,
partial transphyseal and complete transphyseal with hamstring autograft, and BPTB autograft. The rate of revision ACLR was significantly greater (20%) in the partial transphyseal/complete transphyseal with hamstring autograft group compared with the all-epiphyseal technique with HT autograft and BPTB groups (both 6%). These results highlight a group of 8th- and 9th-grade adolescents who are at high risk for graft rupture. There are several potential explanations for this greater rate of revision, including surgical technique, graft choice, level of competition, and the physical and sports-specific development of the athlete. There are also, however, nonmodifiable physical risk factors that should be considered during surgical planning.

The indications for this modified Lemaire ITB tenodesis procedure have not been definitively established. We currently recommend considering this procedure to enhance the ALCR for patients in 8th and 9th grade (ages 13-15 years) who participate in high-risk competitive sports requiring cutting, pivoting, and jumping. High-risk sports in our practice include football, lacrosse, soccer, and basketball. These patients are also indicated if they present with a grade 3 pivot shift, anterior translation >7 mm side-to-side deference, lateral tibial slope >7°, recurvatum >10°, notch width index <0.22, large marrow edema patterns involving

| Table 1. Pearls and Pitfalls of a Modified Lemaire ITB Tenodesis |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Harvest Incision can be Limited to 5 cm or less               |
| Avoid Kaplan’s fibers posteriorly when harvesting the ITB graft|
| Direct the tenodesis anchor drill distal to avoid the growth plate and anterior to avoid convergence with the distal femoral socket of ACLR |
| Consider the use of intraoperative fluoroscopy to ensure graft fixation does not compromise the femoral physis |
| Minimize the potential for overconstraint by maintaining the tibia in neutral rotation at the time of fixation and tensioning |
| Avoid overtensioning of the graft, as the goal of the procedure is to serve as a checkrein |

ACLR, anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction; ITB, iliotibial band.
the lateral tibial plateau and lateral femoral condyle or hyperlaxity (Beighton >6). Other important considerations are patients with chronic ACL insufficiency, contralateral ACLR, or revision ACLR.

The 2 most significant risks and limitations of this procedure include the potential for compromise of the distal femoral physis and convergence of the tenodesis suture anchor with the femoral socket of the ACLR. Long-term considerations include potential overconstraint and the subsequent development of degenerative arthritis. Although there are limited data, Devitt et al. reported in a best-evidence study that no increased rate of osteoarthritis developed 11 years after isolated LET and primary ACLR augmented with a LET procedure.

Our experience with this technique has shown promising results thus far. To date, 51 patients younger than 20 years of age have undergone the modified Lemaire procedure alongside ACLR with quadriceps tendon autograft. None of the patients have experienced graft tear or other significant complications. Thirty-one patients have postoperative magnetic resonance imaging, which demonstrates an intact graft (Fig 8). With favorable short term preliminary results, we recommend this procedure as an enhancement to primary ACLR for active adolescents at a high risk of graft retear.

Table 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of a Modified Lemaire Iliotibial Band Tenodesis

| Advantages                                      | Disadvantages                                      |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Diminishes recurrence rate and increases the return to sport rate in a high-risk population of athletes with nonmodifiable risk factors | Additional surgical approach and scar Additional time in the operating room The potential for overconstraint |

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Fig 8. Postoperative coronal magnetic resonance imaging of a 12-year-old girl 7.5 months following transphyseal anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction with quad autograft and lateral extra-articular tenodesis in the form of an iliotibial band tenodesis. Note how the lateral anchor (A) is just distal to the femoral physis (B).
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