

Print ISSN: 2636-4174

Online ISSN: 2682-3780



Original Article

Available online at Journal Website https://ijma.journals.ekb.eg/ Main Subject [Neurosurgery]



Endoscopic Microvascular Decompression for Trigeminal Neuralgia

Ebrahim Samy Atiah ¹*, Mustafa Abd El-Samie Rabea ¹, Ahmed Adel Ayad ²

¹Department of Neurosurgery, Damietta Faculty of Medicine, Al-Azhar University, Damietta, Egypt.

² Department of Neurosurgery, Faculty of Medicine, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.

ABSTRACT

Article info Received: Accepted:	rmation 22-06-2022 03-09-2022	Background: A severe, intermittent pain in the trigeminal nerve distribution are on one side of the face is known as trigeminal neuralgia. The primar pathophysiological cause of trigeminal neuralgia is neurovascula compression, which results in demyelination of the trigeminal nerve root the cerebellopontine angle area. Endoscopes offer 360-degree views ar bright lighting, making it much easier to spot and treat vascular conflicts that with conventional techniques.				
DOI: 10.21608/IJI	MA.2022.146440.1474	 The Aim of the work: To evaluate the effectiveness of endoscopic microvascular decompression in patients with primary trigeminal neuralgia regarding pain control, recurrence rate and procedure-related complications. Patients and methods: The current study was applied on 12 patients with 1ry 				
Corresponding author Email: ebrahimsamy865@gmail.com		trigeminal neuralgia whom afforded to endoscopic micro-vascula decompression with mean age 59.1±9.54 years. All were submitted to clinica assessment through full history, clinical neurological examination, laboratory and imaging studies. The outcome was assessed by different scales, like visual analogue scale [VAS], pain intensity score of Barrow Neurological				
Citation: Atiah ES, Rabea MA, Ayad AA. Evaluation of Endoscopic Microvascular Decompression for Trigeminal Neuralgia. IJMA 2022		 Institute [BNI], general and facial function scores. The follow up visits were scheduled directly after surgery, and at 3 and 6 months postoperatively. Results: The commonest affected vessel in the present study was superior cerebellar artery [SCA] [41.75%] then anterior inferior cerebellar artery 				
July; 4 [7]: 2485-2493. doi: 10.21608/IJMA.2022.146440.1474.		[AICA] [16.7%]. Majority of patients use carbamazepine [66.7%], followed by gabapentin [58.3%]; 33% of the patients were on monotherapy and 66.7% were on combined therapy. There was significant progressive improvement of pain, general and facial function directly after surgery and till the end of follow up duration. The most common reported complication was transient unsteadiness [16.7%], with recurrence rate of 8.3% after 6 months.				
		Conclusion: Endoscopic microvascular decompression for trigeminal neuralgia can have a promising result as regard relieving of pain with subsequent improvement of general and facial function scores with low frequency of complications and recurrence.				

Keywords: Trigeminal; Neuralgia; Endoscope; Microvascular; Decompression



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INTRODUCTION

Recurrent pain attacks in the region where the trigeminal nerve branches are spread are referred to as trigeminal neuralgia [TGN]. One of the most common types of facial pain is this one. The majority of the time, the pain is unilateral, acute in start, momentary in duration, and stimulus-dependent. Maximum teeth [V2] and mandibular [V3] branches are where the pain is most frequently felt, and the ophthalmic [V1], V2, V3, or all three divisions are where it is felt least frequently. It is extremely uncommon to only involve V1. There are two categories of TGN: [1] classical or primary TGN, and [2] secondary TGN. Vascular loop is responsible for "classical TGN". Secondary TGN results from multiple sclerosis, postherpetic neuralgia, post-traumatic neuralgia, and space-occupying lesions like meningioma, arterio-venous malformation, and CPA tumor ^{[1,} 2]

Due to its successful surgical outcomes and ability to avoid long-term recurrence, microvascular decompression [MVD] has come to be recognized as the preferred surgical method for the treatment of trigeminal neuralgia [TN]. For some patients, pharmaceutical therapy is enough to effectively control the symptoms of TN, which include intense, sporadic facial pain brought on by inflammation and injury to the trigeminal or fifth cranial nerve ^[3-5].

TG is a clinical syndrome interfering with patients' daily activity; although pain could be remediable with medical therapy, 20-23% of patients fail to hold permanent relief. MVD is the treatment of choice in these particular cases [6-8].

Acute TN symptoms can be improved with ablative techniques, however microvascular decompression has shown to be superior in terms of short- and long-term recurrence ^[9-11].

neurosurgery, In the endoscope has established itself as a common instrument, but the shift from microvascular decompression to totally endoscopic MVD has been slower and more recent. Enhancements and applications may have a positive impact on outcomes as EMVD usage increases. In contrast to conventional MVD, fully EMVD may be carried out using 4 mm 0° and 30° endoscopes. A pneumatic holding mechanism is utilized to attach the endoscope ^[12, 13], and this allows for the detection of perforators and neurovascular compression. With the help of Teflon string and fibrin adhesive, the damaged vessel is securely transposed while the perforator is preserved ^[14, 15].

THE AIM OF THE WORK

The aim of the work was to evaluate the effectiveness of endoscopic microvascular decompression in patients with primary trigeminal neuralgia regarding: pain control, recurrence rate and procedure-related complications.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

This research is a prospective observational study, held in a tertiary care single-center analysis [The department of Neurosurgery-Functional Unit-Faculty of medicine Al-Azhar University, Damietta, Egypt] for 12 patients with primary trigeminal neuralgia. Endoscopic microvascular decompression was done for all patients. The follow up visits were immediate post-operative, and 3 and 6 months after intervention.

Ethical aspects: The study protocol was reviewed and accepted by the committee of ethics [Faculty of Medicine, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt]. Each participant signed an informed consent and the study had been completed according to the codes of research conduct and reporting [Helsinki declaration].

Inclusion criteria: Patients with primary trigeminal neuralgia, who had no response to the medical treatment for at least 6 months.

Exclusion criteria: Patients with trigeminal neuralgia symptoms secondary to tumors or multiple sclerosis.

Methods: All patients were submitted to clinical assessment by complete history about the condition, general and neurological examination and assessment of pain by visual analogue scale [VAS], and pain intensity score of Barrow Neurological Institute [BNI] for facial pain [Table 1] ^[16]. A specific radiological assessment was completed by the fast imaging employing steady state acquisition [FIESTA] MRI of the brain was the pre-operative neuroimaging modality. In addition, brain noncontrast computed tomography [CT], and MRI with contrast were used to exclude secondary causes. Finally, magnetic resonance angiography [MRA] of the brain was used to detect the responsible vessels. The routine preoperative laboratory workup included complete blood count [CBC], liver and renal function tests, and coagulation profile. Electrocardiography, echocardiography and plain chest X-ray were used to assess the general condition of the patient.

Table [1]: Barrow	Neurological	Institute [BNI	pain	intensity sco	re ^[17]
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Grade of pain intensity	Score of pain	Description	
Ι	0	No pain, no treatment	
II	1	Occasional pain, no treatment required	
III	2	Some pain, adequately controlled with treatment	
IV	3	Some pain, not adequately controlled with treatment	
V	4	Severe pain/no pain relief	

VAS Score: The visual analogue scale [VAS] is a straightforward evaluation tool that is frequently used to measure pain. It consists of a 10-cm line with 0 on one end, signifying no pain, and 10 on the other end, signifying the worst pain ever felt. A patient is asked to indicate the perceived intensity of their pain using the VAS.

BNI score: Barrow Neurological Institute [BNI] pain intensity score is a tool used to measure the degree of facial pain. It is graded from I to V and has 2 elements. 1st part measure pain intensity [no pain, occasional pain, some pain, sever pain]. 2nd part is level of medications used ^[17].

Consent for surgery: All participants who agree to share in this study signed an informed consent form after being fully informed about the technique and its circumstances prior to the operation of full EVD. It includes discussing the operative procedure with its intended benefits of pain relief and possible improving function. Also discussing possible postoperative complications

Surgical technique

The surgery was completed under general anesthesia. Intravenous prophylactic antibiotics were given 30 minutes before surgery. The surgery done while the patient was in the lateral [park-bench] position with the affected side facing upwards. In order to make mastoid at the highest position and maintain blood flow to the neck, the head should be lowered by 15°, and rotated 10° to the healthy side. The hair of the head on intended area was shaved. Fixation of the head onto the operating bed to be achieved with Mayfield head frame. Monitoring of

auditory evoked potentials and any abnormal muscle response. To make a 2cm burr hole opening in the skull, a 3 cm length skin incision behind the auricle should be done. Suboccipital retro sigmoid craniectomy was done. Dural opening is behind the junction of the sigmoid and the transverse sinus. The endoscope is used in all next steps without using the microscope at any stage alone or with assistance. Maintaining a strict triangle during the introduction and placement of the endoscope and hand instruments and fixation to the operative field by a mechanical holding system attached to the operative table. Endoscope was placed at the vertex of a virtual equilateral triangle in surgical field of view; the vertex represented the "12 o'clock" position. The aspirator and microinstrument passed underneath the endoscope at the "5 o'clock" and "7 o'clock" positions. The subarachnoid space was open to release the CSF very slow. To avoid brainstem retraction to see any hidden structure adjust the angle of endoscope. The trigeminal nerve was identified and the arachnoid membrane surrounding the nerve was dissected for complete release. The operative area was washed by saline and aspiration of such saline. Gelatin sponge was attached to bleeding points. The vascular conflict was identified and Teflon strips was placed in between artery and the nerve root. Removal of endoscope then watertight dural closure.

The postoperative assessment included clinical and radiological assessment. The clinical neurological included the conscious level, cranial nerves examination, and symptoms of increased intracranial pressure. The postoperative radiological assessment was achieved through computed tomography [CT] of the brain without contrast. The follow up was scheduled direct postoperative time, 3 and 6 months after intervention. Checking and recording of any postoperative unwanted

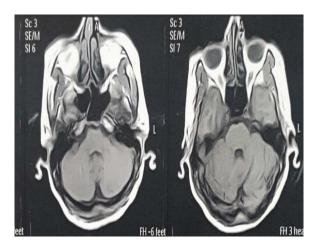


Figure [1]: Preoperative MRI brain with contrast

situation such as [e.g., pain relief, [CSF] leakage, intracranial infection, cerebral hemorrhage, and neurological deficits].



Figure [2]: Intraoperative view of EMVD

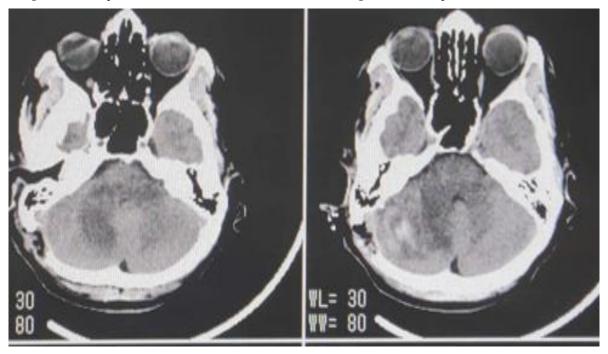


Figure [3]: Postoperative CT brain without contrast

Statistical analysis

SPSS statistical programme version 12 was used for data entry and analysis [SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL, USA]. A mean and standard deviation were used to present the quantitative data. To assess the effect of surgery on the mean of outcome scores, a paired t-test was performed. The qualitative data were shown as percentages and numbers. The connection between the variables in the qualitative data was determined using the chi-square. Significant results are indicated by P values of <0.05.

RESULTS

In the current work, 12 patients were included. Their age ranged between 46 and 76 years, the majority were females [58.3%]. The mean age at the onset of symptoms was 57.42 ± 8.67 years. The pain distribution was V2 in 5 cases [3 right and 2 left], V3 in 2 cases [one on the right and one on the left], V1 and V2 was reported on one case on the right side, V2 and V3 was reported in 3 patients [2 on the right and one on the left]. The V1, V2 and V3 was reported by one patient [left side] [Table 2].

According to vessel distribution, the most common was superior cerebellar artery [SCA] among five cases [41.7%] then anterior inferior cerebellar artery in 16.7%. The least affected vessel was basilar artery [8.3%] [Table 3].

The majority of patients use carbamazepine 8[66.7%] followed by gabapentin 7[58.3%] 4 [33.3%] of the patients were on monotherapy and eight [66.7%] were on combined therapy [Table 4].

In the current work, the function outcome at the end of follow up was favorable, as there was statistically progressive significant decrease of pain, general functions score and facial function scores after surgery an at the follow up visits [Table 5].

The frequent postoperative complications were transient unsteadiness/dizziness [16.7%]. Then, hearing loss, vertigo, headaches, vision problems, CSF leak, and facial palsy [each in 8.3%] [Table 6].

			The studied patients [N=12]
Age [years]		Mean±SD	59.1 ±9.54
		[range]	[46 - 76]
Sex		Male	5 [41.7%]
		Female	7 [58.3%]
Age at onset of symptoms Mean ± SD			57.42 ± 8.67
Pain distribution	V2	Right	3 [25%]
		Left	2 [16.7%]
V3		Right	1 [8.3%]
		Left	1 [8.3%]
	V1 and V2	Right	1 [8.3%]
	V2 and V3	Right	2 [16.7%]
		Left	1 [8.3%]
	V1, V2 and V3	Left	1 [8.3%]

Table [2]: Demographic and pain distribution data of the studied patients

 Table [3]: Vessels distribution among the studied subjects

	The studied patients [N=12]			
	No.	%		
Superior cerebellar artery [SCA]	5	41.7%		
Anterior inferior cerebellar artery [AICA]	2	16.7%		
Vein only	1	8.3%		
SCA and AICA	2	16.7%		
SCA and vein	1	8.3%		
Basilar artery	1	8.3%		

Table [4]: Drug treatment distribution among the studied subjects

	Monotherapy [N=4]		Double therapy [N=2]		Triple therapy [N=3]		Quadruple therapy [N=3]	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Phenytoin	1	25%	1	50%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
Carbamazepine	1	25%	1	50%	3	100%	3	100%
Oxcarbazepine	1	25%	1	50%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
Gabapentin	1	25%	1	50%	2	66.7%	3	100%
Baclofen	0		0		1	33.3%	3	100%

	Variables	Baseline	Immediate PO	At 3 months	At 6 months	P value
Pain	Score at its Worst	9.88 ± 1.31	6.27 ± 1.02	1.63 ± 0.528	0.0	< 0.001*
	Score at its Least pain	1.25 ± 0.445	1.03 ± 0.369	0.881 ± 0.101	0.0	< 0.001*
General	Activity	8.66 ± 2.51	5.68 ± 1.93	1.87 ± 0.954	0.0	< 0.001*
function store	Mood	8.35 ±2.16	6.37 ± 2.08	1.92 ± 0.642	0.0	< 0.001*
	Walking	3.26 ± 1.13	2.11 ± 0.917	0.942 ± 0.346	0.0	< 0.001*
	Work	8.19 ±1.27	5.44 ± 1.62	1.75 ± 0.747	0.0	< 0.001*
	Relationships	7.56 ± 1.92	4.51 ± 1.14	1.97 ± 0.854	0.0	< 0.001*
	Sleep	7.64 ±2.13	4.78 ± 1.27	1.35 ± 0.612	0.0	< 0.001*
	Enjoyment of life	9.32 ± 2.68	7.14 ± 1.15	1.71 ± 0.851	0.0	< 0.001*
	Mean score	6.42 ± 1.87	4.05 ± 1.19	$2.48{\pm}0.972$	1.1 ± 0.057	< 0.001*
Facial function	Eating	9.67 ± 2.58	5.32 ± 1.38	1.63 ± 0.651		< 0.001*
score	Touching	8.71 ± 1.67	3.54 ± 1.04	1.01 ± 0.652		< 0.001*
	Brushing	9.28 ± 2.27	5.23 ± 1.68	1.72 ± 0.843		< 0.001*
	Smiling	8.43 ± 2.31	4.54 ± 1.53	1.64 ± 0.751		< 0.001*
	Talking	8.87 ± 1.41	4.72 ± 1.37	1.83 ± 0.882		< 0.001*
	Opening mouth	8.38 ± 1.57	4.92 ± 1.38	1.33 ± 0.762		< 0.001*
	Hard foods	10.14 ± 2.85	5.42 ± 1.64	1.58 ± 0.921		< 0.001*
	Mean total score	7.61 ± 1.19	5.58 ± 1.02	2.16 ± 0.935	1.3 ± 0.074	< 0.001*

Table [5]: Functional outcome of the studied patien	t
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 Table [6]: Postoperative complications and mortality among the studied patients

		The studied patients [N=12]		
		No.	%	
Complications	Hearing loss	1	8.3%	
	Transient unsteadiness/dizziness	2	16.7%	
	Vertigo	1	8.3%	
	Headaches	1	8.3%	
	Vision problems	1	8.3%	
	CSF leak	1	8.3%	
	Facial palsy	1	8.3%	

DISCUSSION

The current work aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of endoscopic microvascular decompression in patients with primary trigeminal neuralgia regarding pain control, procedure-related recurrence rate and complications. Twelve patients were included, females represented 58.3% of them. The V2 distribution was the commonest and superior cerebellar artery as the commonest vessel. transient unsteadiness [16.7%] was the common reported postoperative complication. The functional outcome was favorable as the pain score was progressively and significantly reduced from its basal preoperative values to be nearly absent at the end of follow up duration. All domains of general function and facial function scores were significantly improved immediately postoperative and progressive improvement was witnessed until the end of follow up duration.

Farid and Elkheshin ^[18] reported a female sex predominance [76.0%] among 25 patients with TN, and SCA was the commonest compressed vessel [88%]. **Yadav** *et al.* ^[19] found 28/51 patients [54.9%] were V2 and 20/51 were V3 [39.2%]. These results are confirmed in the current work, regardless of the high percentages of females in **Farid and Elkheshin** ^[17] which could be explained by different inclusion criteria and increased their sample. Similarly, **Dubey** *et al.* ^[20] included 230 patients with TN for full endoscopic microvascular decompression and found that SCA was the utmost frequent vascular dispute followed by AICA [96/230].

In the current study; the most common postoperative complication was transient unsteadiness [16.7%]. Another study by **Teo** *et al.* ^[21] which was conducted on 114 patients with TN who underwent endoscopic microvascular decompression and reported that 9 patients had trigeminal sensory dysfunction, and

2 patients had hearing affection postoperatively. Thirumala et al.^[22] reported on 93 TN patients with different types of neuralgias and revealed the percentage of hearing loss accounted 30.84%. Kher et al. ^[23] conducted a study on 178 patients with TN who underwent endoscopic microvascular decompression and found that only 11/178 of patients their pain relief was less than 75% and required pain medications, there was no death, temporary complications included trigeminal dysesthesia [3.9%], CSF leak, facial paresis, decreased hearing and vertigo in 5, 7, 3, 6 patients respectively. El-Garem et al. [24] A study was done on 42 TN cases to evaluate the use of endoscopy in TN cases. It found that 10% of the patients had CSF leaks, but only 1% of them required revision surgery. Facial palsy struck 3% of individuals. Abdeen et al. ^[25] study which was conducted on 12 cases of TN. Another study by Artz et al. [26] was conducted on 20 TN patients who underwent endoscopic vascular decompression which found a reduced incidence of complications and a better prognosis than other studies. Careful repair and avoiding the use of brain retractors can prevent these issues.

The current study revealed statistically significant decreased mean pain score as its worst and least from baseline to follow up. Another study by Akkaya et al. [27] included 63 TN patients, 69.8% were pain free following pure microscopic microvascular decompression. Also, Sindou et al. ^[28] explained how SCA may have branches that are masked by the medial trigeminal root and lateral pons, making it difficult to see under a microscope. An almost two-fold greater Field of view was offered by a 30° endoscope than by a microscope, according to Tang et al.^[29]. Another study by Setty et al. ^[30] assessed the outcomes of a group of TN patients who underwent EMVD treatment and found that 98% of them either total pain reduction or well-controlled pain following surgery. Another study by **Dubey** et al.^[20] at the end of a 3-month and 5-year follow-up period, respectively, 93.5% and 82.6% of patients had completely relieved their pain.

In contrast, several studies found no appreciable difference between the cure rates for TN treated with EMVD and microscopy by **Xiang et al.** ^[31]. According to another work by **Lee et al.** ^[32] complete EVD and standard MVD appeared to offer patients similar levels of alleviation from face pain. In a similar study by

Komatsu *et al.* ^[14] reported full symptom remission and no mortality following EVD.

In line with the results of the current work, **Bohman** *et al.* ^[12] study which was conducted on 47 TN patients who had EMVD and revealed statistically significant decreased facial function score postoperatively and in follow up with p-value <0.0001. They also revealed statistically significant decreased facial function score postoperatively and in follow up with p-value <0.0001.

Consider the low depth of field and the requirement for hand-eye coordination as disadvantages of the fully endoscopic approach. Practicing on cadavers and models calls for a lot of effort. The process, however, becomes simple and secure once the initial steep learning curve has been passed. Also taken into account is decompression, which necessitates bimanual dexterity. The surgeon cannot reach this level of dexterity if he or she is made to hold the endoscope. As a result, full EMVD is performed utilizing an endoscopic holder, allowing the surgeon to perform the decompression without the use of a surgical microscope. Nevertheless, the endoscope holder does not offer a sufficient dynamic range of movement. By synchronizing with the primary operator, an assistant with extensive endoscopic experience should perform EMVD procedures. The assistant's presence can significantly reduce the length of the operation [13, 33, 34].

Conclusion

Endoscopic microvascular decompression for trigeminal neuralgia can have a promising result as regard relieving of pain with subsequent improvement of general and facial function scores with low frequency of complications and recurrence.

Study limitations and recommendations: The current study adds to the available literature about the role of endoscopic microvascular decompression for trigeminal neuralgia and confirmed the efficacy and safety of the procedure. However, it was conducted on narrow scale, which need further longitudinal studies with large sample size for further evaluation of endoscopic microvascular decompression for trigeminal neuralgia. Endoscopic microvascular decompression is needed to be compared with other techniques.

Conflict of interest and financial disclosure: None

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International Journal

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