

ANTERIOR SAGITTAL TRANSANORECTAL APPROACH (ASTRA) WITH NO PROTECTIVE COLOSTOMY IN INTERSEX SURGERY

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Introduction: Anterior-Sagittal-Trans-Anorectal-Approach (ASTRA) was introduced to optimize view and surgical repair of several pathological conditions of posterior urethra, proximal vagina and urogenital-sinus (UGS). ASTRA was initially proposed together with a temporary protective colostomy. In the last 7 years, ASTRA with no-diverting-colostomy was utilized in 32 children and young adults affected by intersex disorders. Long-term follow-up of these 32 patients is presented in order to examine ASTRA role in intersex surgery and to prove ASTRA security with no-colostomy

Methods: Between April 1997 and February 2004, 32 surgical procedures through ASTRA in intersex disorders have been consecutively performed. Twenty-seven patients were affected by Congenital-Adrenal-Hyperplasia - CAH - (Secondary or redo-vaginoplasty was realized in 26 of them and primary vaginoplasty in only 1), 3 by müllerian duct remnants, and 2 by aphallia. All patients received a full bowel preparation before surgery and no-colostomy was performed

Results: Follow-up ranged from 1 to 7 years. Complete postoperative evaluation was carried out in all patients, including EUA. Looking exclusively at surgical approach itself or lack of protective colostomy, no related complications were detected. Specifically, no perineal wound infection or faecal incontinence were observed

Conclusions: In 1997 and 1998 ASTRA was proposed as a simplification of Peña approach to posterior urethra, vagina and UGS. At that time, short-term diverting colostomy was considered to be mandatory in Peña approach and strongly recommended in ASTRA. Afterwards, Pediatric Urologists in Europe, North-America and Middle-East successfully used ASTRA with protective colostomy, confirming ASTRA superb surgical exposure. Short after the introduction of ASTRA, we started performing it with no-colostomy in intersex surgery. Long-term follow-up of 32 cases shows outstanding outcomes. ASTRA confirmed to provide excellent exposure and visualization of all structures located deep in the pelvis. ASTRA with no-colostomy is an excellent and safe procedure, particularly indicated and useful in intersex surgical repair. It allows to abolish a second operation for colostomy closure and to avoid discomforts and possible complications due to intestinal stoma itself, besides preventing an unpleasant abdominal scar

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