

New Guideline for Transvaginal Mesh Procedures for Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Ottawa – November 1, 2017 - The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (SOGC) has released the clinical practice guideline, [*Transvaginal Mesh Procedures for Pelvic Organ Prolapse*](#), which reviews the risks and benefits of these repairs and updates recommendations first made in 2011.

The new guideline says transvaginal mesh still has an important use in urogynaecology in select cases because it can improve anatomical outcomes, especially for women with recurrent prolapse and for those with risk factors for failure after native tissue repairs. But, because it can also be associated with an increased risk of reoperation, mesh exposure, and pain, clinicians must also thoroughly weigh the pros and cons of using it and provide thorough preoperative counselling to their patients.

Pelvic organ prolapse is a common disorder that affects up to 50% of women of all ages. It occurs when a pelvic organ, like the bladder, drops (or prolapses) from its normal position and pushes against the wall of the vagina. The muscles holding these organs weaken or stretch, usually because of childbirth, a vaginal trauma or family history. Many women with mild symptoms can improve the condition by avoiding heavy lifting, or doing Kegel exercises, for example. Others may require some kind of surgery.

Traditional surgical treatments range from suturing to reconstruct and repair the affected organs and surrounding tissue to hysterectomy. Surgeons also can use many kinds of graft material for vaginal surgery including biological, absorbable synthetics, or non-absorbable mesh materials.

Transvaginal mesh first became a popular procedure about 15 years ago. It is a plastic net-like implant that is used in the form of a sling, tape, ribbon, mesh or hammock to give permanent support to weakened organs and help to repair damaged tissue. Once in place, tissues would ideally grow into the pores of the mesh to create a wall of support and alleviate symptoms of pain.

Over the past 10 years many mesh systems have been withdrawn because of complications including mesh exposure, vaginal scarring, and pain. There have been many lessons learned to reduce the risk of these complications, and still ensure that women for whom mesh is the best option will be able to benefit from it.

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About the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information visit www.sogc.org.