Neurosurgical Forum
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tonsil cauterization in children with Chiari Type I malformation

TO THE EDITOR: I read with interest the recent paper by Dr. Stanko and his colleagues¹ on the differences in the incidence and rate of improvement after tonsillar cauterization in children with Chiari I malformation and syringomyelia (Stanko KM, Lee YM, Rios J, et al: Improvement of syrinx resolution after tonsillar cauterization in pediatric patients with Chiari Type I malformation. *J Neurosurg Pediatr* 17:174–181, February 2016). It seems likely that it will be an influential report.

The patients had three different surgical procedures: bone decompression only, dural patch grafting without tonsil cauterization, and tonsil cauterization after opening of the dura. The emphasis in the analysis and discussion is on the comparison of patients with cauterization versus without cauterization and patients with cauterization versus those with bone decompression only. My reading of their report indicates that 93 patients received dural opening and a patch without cauterization, 43 had a dural opening with tonsil cauterization, and 36 had bone decompression only. The procedure favored by many neurosurgeons, probably most, is bone decompression and dural opening with or without grafting, without cauterization, which seems to be successful in almost all patients. Yet there is no analysis or discussion of the outcome of the patients who received that procedure in the report. Can the authors please provide an analysis of that patient

group compared to those treated with bone decompression only and compared to patients with tonsil cauterization?

Also, their results after only bone decompression seem very poor compared to the results in several reports on pediatric patients by others. I also hope the authors will be willing to discuss that in greater detail.

I thank them for the extra effort that the response to this letter will require.

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References

1. Stanko KM, Lee YM, Rios J, Wu A, Sobrinho GW, Weingart JD, et al: Improvement of syrinx resolution after tonsillar cauterization in pediatric patients with Chiari Type I malformation. *J Neurosurg Pediatr* 17:174–181, 2016

Disclosures

The author reports no conflict of interest.

Response

No response was received from the authors of the original article.

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Published online April 22, 2016; DOI: 10.3171/2016.1.PEDS15721.

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