INTRODUCTION

Thoracolumbar anterior spine surgery: contemporary techniques and outcomes

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SPINAL pathologies are varied and encompass a broad spectrum of diseases, including degenerative conditions and those related to deformity, trauma, and infection. For certain conditions, the most direct and efficacious treatment requires an anterior approach to the spine. Although anterior spinal surgery is not new, adoption of anterior approaches has been limited by the perceived morbidity of these techniques compared to posterior approaches and by the limited approach options for anterior procedures. In recent years, however, there has been new insight into the advantages of anterior surgery for improving alignment as well as evolution of new techniques and technologies.

This issue of *Neurosurgical Focus* presents an array of articles focusing on contemporary techniques, outcomes, complications, and novel applications of anterior approaches for spine surgery. Topics ranging from the efficacy of indirect decompression to outcomes for back pain after anterior lumbar fusion are included. There are also several articles evaluating complications of spinal procedures, including those more specific to anterior spinal surgery. In addition, studies of minimally invasive approaches, such as single-position prone lateral fusion and the use of navigation for lateral lumbar interbody fusion, are presented.

The procedures highlighted in this issue of *Neurosurgical Focus* broaden the scope of possibilities for the anterior approach, enabling spine surgeons to minimize surgical morbidity while providing state-of-the-art care for patients who will most benefit from improved alignment and other advantages of thoracolumbar anterior spine surgery.

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Disclosures

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