

Complications of clean intermittent catheterization in young females with myelomeningocele: 10 to 19 years of followup.

[Lindehall B](#), [Abrahamsson K](#), [Jodal U](#), [Olsson I](#), [Sillén U](#).

Regional Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adolescents, Queen Silvia Children's Hospital, Sahlgrenska Academy at Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden.

Birgitta.Lindehall@vgregion.se

PURPOSE: We evaluated the rate of complications associated with catheterization and the risk of urethral lesions in girls with myelomeningocele treated with clean intermittent catheterization for a minimum of 10 years. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** We examined the medical records of 31 females with myelomeningocele followed from the start of clean intermittent catheterization until age 11 to 20 years. Catheterization had been performed for a median of 15 years (range 10 to 19). Altogether, catheterization was used for a total of 459 patient-years. Noncoated polyvinyl chloride catheters were used in all cases. Anticholinergic treatment was given during 176 of the patient-years. **RESULTS:** Complications of catheterization were recorded in 13 patients on 20 occasions. Macroscopic hematuria was seen in 4 individuals. In 2 patients the hematuria was caused by urethral polyps that were cured by resection. Difficulties with catheterization occurred in 12 patients. The problems were solved by temporary use of lubrication or by other minor changes in management. There were no difficulties recorded after puberty. The risk of difficulties at catheterization doubled with the use of a Ch8 to Ch10 catheter compared to a Ch12 or larger catheter, and doubled during assisted clean intermittent catheterization compared to clean intermittent self-catheterization. **CONCLUSIONS:** There were remarkably few problems associated with clean intermittent catheterization in these females with myelomeningocele, despite long treatment periods and use of noncoated polyvinyl chloride catheters. Clean intermittent self-catheterization and large size catheters were associated with few complications.

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