Asian Journal of Orthopaedic Research

2(2): 91-100, 2019; Article no.AJORR.51197

Study of Functional Outcome of Three or Four Part Proximal Humerus Fracture Treated with Primary Hemiarthroplasty

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author NSP designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors RS and ABG managed the analyses of the study. Author VS managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

Editor(s):
(1) Dr. Ikem, Innocent Chiedu, Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria.
Reviewers:
(1) Vinotha Shanmugarajah, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.
(2) Vijaya Krishnan, Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, India.
Complete Peer review History: http://www.sdiarticle3.com/review-history/51197

Original Research Article

Received 16 June 2019
Accepted 30 August 2019
Published 16 September 2019

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The treatment of displaced proximal humerus fracture is challenging and at the same time controversial. It varies from conservative to surgical management. Primary hemiarthroplasty in proximal humerus fracture is indicated in three or four part fracture or fracture dislocations. Main aims of treatment in open reduction and internal fixation are preservation of vascularity of humeral head and an anatomical reduction of fracture, which is difficult in three or four part fractures of proximal humerus. Hence we studied functional outcome of 3 or 4 part proximal humerus fracture treated with primary hemiarthroplasty.

Materials and Methods: Fifteen patients diagnosed with three or four part proximal humerus fracture underwent primary hemiarthroplasty between January 2017 and June 2018. Functional evaluation based on constant score and radiological assessments by periodic X-rays were done. All patients were operated in a 'beach chair position'. The lesser and greater tuberosity were dissected with their tendinous attachments and were later reattached to the proximal humerus for stability of the prosthesis.

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Results: Mean follow up was 14.3 months (range 11-18 months). Mean age was 61.20 years (range 48–78 years). Ten patients were male and five were female. Mean Constant score was 55.25 (range 43.2-64.4) points at final follow up. . Mean anterior elevation was 119.5°(range 75^0-150^0). Mean active abduction was 104° (range 57° - 130°). Mean external rotation was 24° (range 16º - 30º). Proximal migration of tuberosity was present in two patients. Two patients had moderate pain at their final follow up. Twelve (i.e., 80%) patients were satisfied about their functional outcome.

Conclusion: The study showed hemiarthroplasty is a better option in treating proximal humerus fracture in elderly but also is a viable alternative to osteosynthesis for grossly comminuted proximal humerus fractures in young adults.

Keywords: Proximal humerus fracture; primary hemiarthroplasty; tuberosity healing; Neer's Prosthesis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Proximal humerus fracture comprises 4–5% of all fractures [1]. Typically occurs in a bimodal distribution in older women as a result of low-energy falls or in younger men as a result of high-energy trauma [2,3]. The treatment of displaced proximal humerus fracture is controversial. It varies from conservative to surgical management. With continued advancement in techniques and implants surgical fixation of proximal humerus is gaining popularity. Surgical management includes close reduction and percutaneous pinning, open reduction, and internal fixation with locking compression proximal humerus plate and hemiarthroplasty [4]. However, complication rates are still high in humeral head preserving procedures. In particular, osteonecrosis of humeral head remains unchanged even with the most modern of techniques.Thus main aim of treatment with Open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF) are preservation of vascularity of humeral head, an anatomical reduction of fracture, and good functional outcome of the shoulder which is difficult to achieve in three and four part fractures of proximal humerus.Hence nowadays Primarily shoulder hemiarthroplasty is indicated in patients with grossly displaced three and four part fractures or fracture dislocations, split head fractures, impacted fractures with loss of over 40% articular surface, and anatomical neck fractures of proximal humerus where more chances of osteonecrosis are present [5-8]. Neer had described good and satisfactory results after primary shoulder hemiarthroplasty in displaced three and four part fractures [9]. Initially first generation monoblock prostheses were used by Neer in 1970 [9] then replaced by second generation modular prostheses which provided better soft tissue balancing and good range of motion. Third generation prostheses were introduced in 1991 recreating anatomy of proximal humerus more accurately and hence more adaptable to the individual bony anatomy [10,11]. Post operatively Success of shoulder hemiarthroplasty depends on soft tissue integrity with reattachment of the tuberosities, bone quality, glenoid bone stock, stem height, version of the prosthesis, and soft tissue balancing. Hence researchers want to study the functional outcome of three or four part proximal humerus fracture treated with primary hemiarthroplastyand to compare the results with other similar published studies.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

15 patients diagnosed with three or four part proximal humerus fracture (graded according to Neer's classification) based on antero-posterior and oblique radiographs of the shoulder (Fig. 1) underwent primary hemiarthroplasty between January 2017 and June 2018 at KIMS(Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences)hospital were included in this study. If there was difficulty in obtaining the axillary view due to a patient's pain or apprehension, a modified axillary view such as a Velpeau view can be obtained, allowing the patient to remain comfortable in a sling. Neer classification system of Proximal Humerus Fracture is based on the anatomical relationship of four segments: humeral shaft, Greater tuberosity, lesser tuberosity andhead with articular surface. Each segment is considered as separate part in the fracture if there is more than 1cm of displacement or 45° of angulation [12]. Although the Neer classification has demonstrated poor inter and intra-observer reliability, it is still commonly used, due to its simplicity [13]. All patients had acute injuries and were operated within 10 days of injury. Computed tomography (CT) scan with 3-D reconstruction (Fig. 2) was done in all patients

who helped in planning the surgical management. For preoperative planning of arthroplasty, an AP view of the contralateral humerus is used to template the planned length and height of the implant. Patients were discharged on post-operative day 5 and followed up on outdoor basis and were assessed according to a predetermined Score. Clinical and functional assessments were done by Constant score [14]. Constant score consists of 0–100 points for single shoulder. It is divided into subjective and objective components. Subjective component consists of pain (15 points) and activities of daily living (sleep, work, and recreation/sports activities) (20 points). Objective component consists of a range of motion (40 points) and power of muscles (25 points) around shoulder. Patients were followed postoperatively at 2 week (at the time of suture removal), 6 week then monthly for next 3 months, and then 3 monthly till the last follow-up till radiological bony union of the tuberosities was seen. All the patients were atleast followed up for 1 year. Radiological assessment was done with X-rays of shoulder in antero-posterior and axial views, if possible and X-rays were evaluated to assess tuberosity position and its bony union with the proximal humerus, any resorption of tuberosity, distance of top of the humeral head from acromion, and development of radiolucency at bone cement interface. Postoperative infection and loosening of implant were also recorded. For postoperative infection, assessment of wound healing, implant exposed,discharge from operative siteand bloodparameters like complete blood count was done. For loosening of implants, serial radiographs were assessed to see any signs of radiolucency at bone cement interphase.

Case 1.

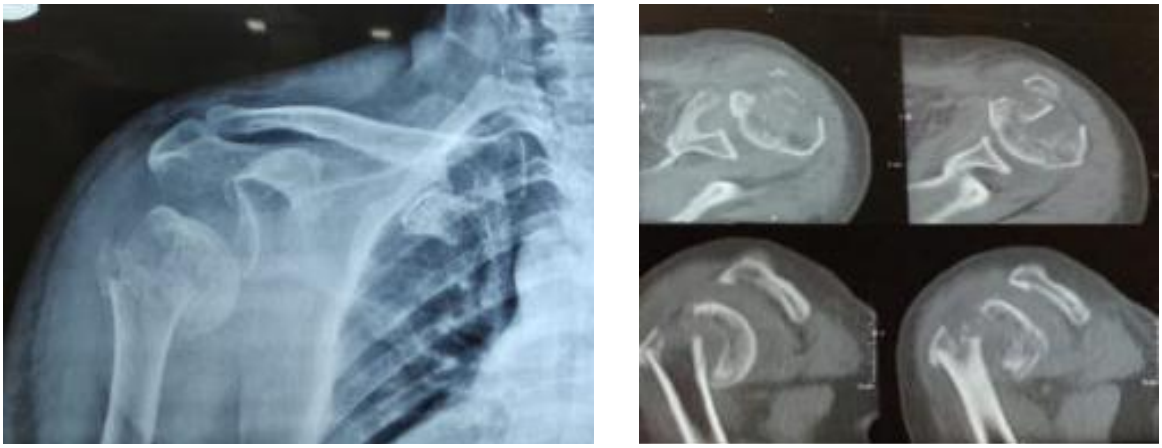

Fig. 1. Pre-operative radiograph and CT scan of proximal humerus fracture

Fig. 2. Pre-operative 3-D reconstruction CT scan of proximal humerus fracture

Case 2.

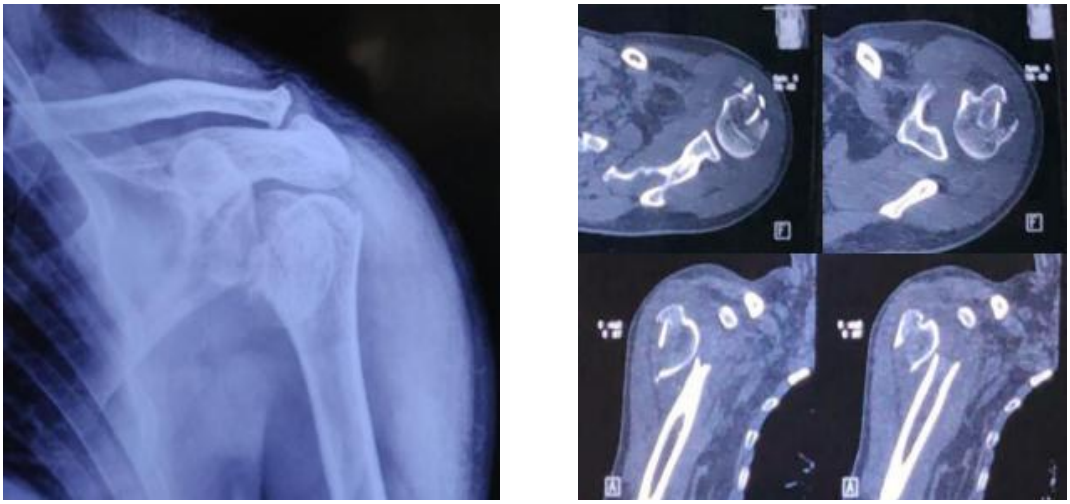

Fig. 3. Pre-operative radiograph and CT scan of a proximal humerus fracture

Fig. 4. Pre-operative 3-D reconstruction CT scan of a proximal humerus fracture

3. OPERATIVE PROCEDURE

All patients were operated in beach chair position with the head of the bed elevated approximately 45°.The freely draped arm can be extended/hyperextended at the patient's side which help proximal humerus for canal reaming, cementation, and implantation of prosthesis. The standard Deltopectoral approach was used (Fig. 5). Significant adhesions and hematoma were encountered which were removed from the subdeltoid space. The fracture line between the tuberosities is almost always located just posterior to the groove. The first part of the procedure is getting control of the tuberosity fragments.In cases of arthroplasty for three-part fractures, 1st osteotomize the lesser tuberosity from the humeral head, in essence creating a four-part fracture (Agarwal et al., 2016). The humeral head is removed, after which the tuberosities are tagged with heavy sutures (Fig. 6). Three sutures are placed at the bone–tendon interface of the greater tuberosity, and one or two are placed in the lesser tuberosity fragment. Next, the humeral canal is exposed and prepared with sequential reaming. Preoperative films and implant measurements can also be used to assess component to ensure proper height of implant. Trial prosthesis is used to check for correct size and placement of the prosthesis. If the trial prosthesis is loose, bone cement is used to fix stem into the humoral medullary cavity. All prostheses were inserted in 20–30° of retroversion by external rotating and adducting the arm. The height of the prosthetic stem was determined by the metaphyseal calcar. In case of severe comminution, pectoralis major insertion was taken as a reference point. Anatomically, prosthetic humeral head lies approximately 5.6 cm proximal to the superior border of the pectoralis major tendon [15]. Fixations of the tuberosities around the prosthesis were done by making drill holes and were tied to the prosthesis and proximal humerus using Ethibond No. 5 sutures. Ethibond sutures were passed through the holes over fin and neck of the prosthesis to tightly secure the tuberosities with their soft tissue attachments (Fig. 7,8). Postoperatively, shoulder immobilizer with sling was given to all the patients.

Fig. 5. Incision site marking

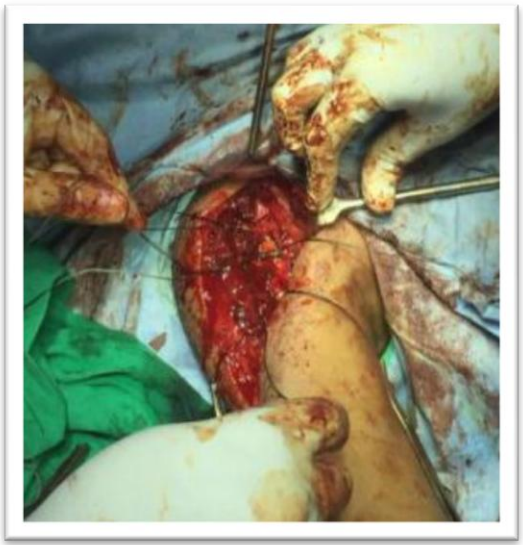

Fig. 6. Tagging of tuberosities

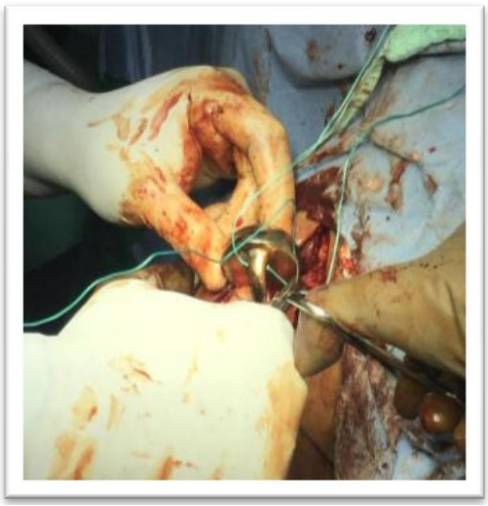

Fig. 7. Fixation of tuberosities with prosthesis

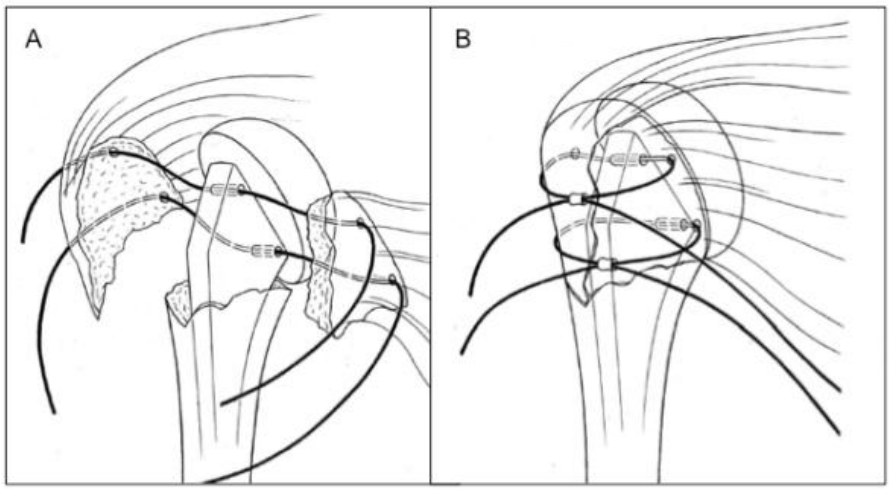

Fig. 8. Schematic diagram of fixation of tuberosities with the prosthesis

Case 1.

Fig. 9. Post-operative radiograph

Fig. 10. 1 year follow up radiograph

Case 2.

Fig. 11. Post-operative radiograph

Fig. 12. 1 year follow up radiograph

3.1 Post-operative Protocol

Immediately after procedure patient is given shoulder pouch with immobilizer which is to be worn for the 1st 2 weeks continuous day and nights and simultaneously patient is started on a rehabilitation program containing active range of motion of the elbow,wrist and hand and passive range of motion of shoulder. External rotation is limited based on intraoperative assessment of repair of tuberosities. Internal rotation is allowed till chest/abdomen and no active external rotation or extension is allowed for the 1st 4 weeks. At the end of 2 weeks post suture removal patient can remove the immobilizer while sleeping at nights. Post-operatively, at 4 weeks immobilizer is removed and passive range of motion and assisted active range of motion are encouraged. By end of 6 weeks light resisted External rotation, forward flexion, abduction and active internal rotation started along with pendulum exercises. Furthermore, radiographs should be taken at 6 weeks to assess tuberosity healing. When evidence of healing is found at approximately 6 to 8 weeks then active assistive with a pulley and isometric strengthening exercises for rotator cuff and deltoid are initiated. These strengthening exercises are continued for next 6 weeks. Daily activities such as personal hygiene and eating are allowed which helps to build early muscle strength and endurance.Patient is encouraged to perform exercises on a daily basis for at least 6 months preferably a year. Weight lifting activities are gradually allowed after 6 months.

4. RESULTS

All patients were operated at Krishna institute of Medical Sciences, Karad. Mean follow up was 14.3 months (range 11-18 months). Mean age was 61.20 years (range 48–78 years). TEN patients were male and FIVE were female. Mean Constant score was 55.25 (range 43.2-64.4) points at final follow up. Anterior elevation of more than 150º was present in 1 patient and from 90º to 150º in 12 patients. Less than 90° of anterior elevation was present in 2 patients. Mean anterior elevation was 119.5º (range 75^0-150º). Functional range of abduction for shoulder was 60–120º. Thirteen patients in our study had a functional range of abduction. One patient had <60° and one patient had 130º of active abduction. Mean active abduction was 104° (range 57º - 130º). Mean external rotation was 24º (range 16º - 30º). Internal rotation was not satisfactory in two patients according to Constant scoring system. Proximal migration of tuberosity was present in two patients. These patients had decreased abduction. No pain to mild pain was present in 13 patients. Two patients had moderate pain at their final follow-up. Twelve (i.e., 80%) patients were satisfied about their functional outcome. Tuberosity migration in two patients and higher placement of prosthetic stem in one patient were the causes of discomfort in three patients. Clinically, this patient had mild pain on elevation above horizontal level. There were no intraoperative complications. No cases of neurological injury, infection, and instability were noted. Heterotrophic calcification was not found in any case. The revision was not done in any case.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to evaluate functional outcome after primary hemiarthroplasty in proximal humerus fracture. Primary hemiarthroplasty in displaced three and four part proximal humerus fracture was initially proposed by Neer [9] and found to have good results as compared to conservative management in all age group and better than osteosynthesis in elderly. In younger patients, with complex, grossly comminuted, or displaced fractures, primary hemiarthroplasty can be considered as a primary treatment. Initial varus alignment >20° is also consider a viable indication of primary hemiarthroplasty because of high failure rate in osteosynthesis [16]. Results of primary hemiarthroplasty are better than secondary hemiarthroplasty in cases of posttraumatic malunion, nonunion, and avascular necrosis of proximal humerus [17-19]. Researchers used Constant score for functional evaluation which is universally accepted and validated.(11) The major aims of hemiarthroplasty in fracture of proximal humerus are pain relief, early and adequate shoulder function, patient satisfaction, and strength. Advanced surgical techniques and anatomical tuberosity fixation correlate directly with the outcome. Factors that affect the tuberosity union are positioning of prosthesis, stable fixation of tuberosity, and bone quality (rate of non-union are higher in elderly and in osteoporotic bone) [16]. Higher placement of prosthesis is associated with higher risk of tuberosity nonunion and pain [16]. Hence, the assessment of stem height at the time of implantation is important. During surgery, in neutral position, there should be a gap of at least 1 cm or one finger width between the implant and the acromion.

Fig. 13. Range of movements at 1 year follow up

Boileau et al. [20] showed that tuberosity healing was a major determinant of functional outcome. In their study, 23% patients had detachment and migration of tuberosity, while in our study that was only 13.34%. Modern prosthesis has holes over proximal end of the prosthesis for better attachment and integration of tuberosities. Anatomical healing of tuberosity gives good functional outcome due to the restoration of rotator cuff anatomy. Tuberosity migration was the main complication in our study and produced inferior results in two patients (13.34%).

Castricini et al. [21] performed primary shoulder hemiarthroplasty in 57 patients. Mean Constant score was 59.2 at mean followup of 52 months in their study which reflects good function. In our study, mean Constant score was 55.25 after mean followup of 14.3 months. Although Constant score remains low in primary hemiarthroplasty, it is acceptable in low demanding elderly patients. Major advantage of hemiarthroplasty is pain relief which is the main factor for patient satisfaction. Castricini et al. mentioned very satisfactory results in 91% patient in spite of low Constant score.

Kontakis et al. [22] had done a large systemic review of literature with primary shoulder hemiarthroplasty for proximal humerus fracture. They reviewed 16 similar studies with 810 shoulder hemiarthroplasty done for three or four part proximal humerus fracture and fracture dislocations. The mean active anterior elevation was 105.7º (10–180º) and mean abduction was 92.4º (15–170º). In their study, the main complication was associated with tuberosity healing which occurred in 11.15% cases. Heterotrophic ossification was found in 8.8% cases, and proximal migration of humerus head was in 6.8% cases. The mean Constant score was 56.63 (11–98).

In present study, no patient had severe pain. Two patients had moderate pain at their final followup, while 13 patients had zero to mild pain. Severe pain in hemiarthroplasty was related to the stiffness of shoulder. Early passive movement of shoulder was started in all patients, so stiffness did not develop in any patient. Our study showed that older age and comminution of fracture had significantly affected tuberosity healing.

Liu et al. [23] looked at 33 patients undergoing hemiarthroplasty for fracture and found that healing of the tuberosities was poor in 18 patients; those patients with abnormal tuberosity healing had significantly higher pain scores and lower functional outcomes.

The pain free adequate range of motion of shoulder is the primary goal in shoulder hemiarthroplasty. Tuberosity healing plays the main role in good range of motion and is an important determinant of functional outcome. This study had no control group, shorter mean followup of 14.3 months and small sample size (n

= 15) were limitations of this study. Further study with large sample size and longer followups are required to access the factors related to wear rate and implant loosening.

6. CONCLUSION

The study showed that hemiarthroplasty in a grossly comminuted proximal humerus fracture is a viable alternative to osteosynthesis in middle age group and definative mangment in elderly. Tuberosity healing plays main role in good range of motion and better functional outcome after shoulder hemiarthroplasty.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per university standard guideline, participant consent and ethical approval have been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
http://www.sdiarticle3.com/review-history/51197