Re: "Systematic Review of Complications of Tonsillotomy versus Tonsillectomy"
Joanna Walton, Yaniv Ebner, Michael G. Stewart and Max M. April
Otolaryngology -- Head and Neck Surgery 2012 147: 1164
DOI: 10.1177/0194599812463551

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://oto.sagepub.com/content/147/6/1164.1
Letters to the Editor

Re: “Systematic Review of Complications of Tonsillotomy versus Tonsillectomy”
DOI: 10.1177/0194599812463551

No sponsorships or competing interests have been disclosed for this article.

We are writing in response to the recent publication by Acevedo and colleagues: “Systematic Review of Complications of Tonsillotomy versus Tonsillectomy.” The renewed interest in partial tonsillectomy as a treatment for tonsillar hypertrophy in sleep-disordered breathing has provoked rigorous debate within the otolaryngologic community. In 2003, Koltai published the first large retrospective series of 243 children undergoing partial tonsillectomy for sleep-disordered breathing, and since that time, there has been a plethora of studies comparing total and partial tonsillectomy in this population.

Most otolaryngologists would agree that if the partial tonsillectomy technique is used, it should be confined to a population with sleep-disordered breathing, and certainly most of the published evidence examines the pediatric cohort alone. For these reasons, it was disappointing that the authors included in their systematic review and meta-analysis studies comparing partial and total tonsillectomy in patients for whom tonsillitis was the indication for surgery. In addition, conclusions were drawn for adults and children.

A previous systematic review of the level 1 evidence in the pediatric cohort comparing partial tonsillectomy to total tonsillectomy where the indication for surgery was sleep-disordered breathing has shown different conclusions to those you have published. Superior outcomes were reported for partial tonsillectomy compared with total tonsillectomy for secondary hemorrhage rate and the number of days until pain free with no difference in other recovery-related outcomes.

Given that the otolaryngologic community is currently trying to determine best practice in this area, we feel this is an important distinction that should be drawn.

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Disclosures
Competing interests: None.
Sponsorships: None.
Funding source: None.

References

In Response to “Re: ‘Systematic Review of Complications of Tonsillotomy versus Tonsillectomy’” from Walton et al.
DOI: 10.1177/0194599812463552

No sponsorships or competing interests have been disclosed for this article.

In response to the commentary by Walton et al, several interesting points were raised, and we would like to comment. First, it