

Outcome of Transcanalicular (TC) LASER DCR Compared to External DCR

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Received: May 06, 2021; **Published:** May 18, 2021

Abstract

Aim: To assess the anatomical and functional outcome of transcanalicular LASER DCR compared to external DCR.

Methods: An quasi study was carried out in two tertiary eye hospitals in Bangladesh from January 2016 to June 2020. Group A included all patients selected for external DCR, and group B had selected for transcanalicular laser DCR. Variable included age, gender, anatomical outcome, functional outcome, and surgery-related complications. Statistical analysis had done by Quick Calcs Graph Pad software.

Results: The total evaluated patients were 112 patients in group A and 41 patients in group B. The anatomical success rate was 93% in group A and 86% in group B. The functional success rate was 86% in group A and noted 83% in group B. Minimal skin scar in 80% cases of group A after six weeks of surgery.

Conclusion: The anatomical success rate is higher in external DCR, but the functional outcomes are almost the same in both groups.

Key words: Dacryocystitis; Nasolacrimal duct obstruction; External DCR; Transcanalicular LASER DCR; Anatomical and functional outcome

Abbreviations: DCR= Dacryocystorhinostomy, TC= Transcanalicular, NLD=Nasolacrimal duct, PNADO= Primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction, MMC= Mitomycin-C

Citation: Syeed Mehbub Ul Kadir, *et al.* (2021). Outcome of Transcanalicular (TC) LASER DCR Compared to External DCR. *Journal of Ophthalmology and Vision Research* 3(1).

Introduction

A Dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) surgery is making an anastomosis between the lacrimal sac and the nasal cavity at the level of the middle meatus by cutting the intervening bone. This new opening is proximal to the site of nasolacrimal duct obstruction and re-establishes the tear flow into the nose. Different approaches are available for DCR surgery, e.g. external, transnasal and both. These approaches include external or conventional DCR, Non LASER endoscopic DCR, endoscopic endonasal laser DCR, and transcanalicular laser-assisted DCR. The traditional or external DCR is considered the standard gold technique for managing acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction [1-2]. Caldwell first introduced the transnasal DCR in 1893 but did not widely accept it due to complex visualization of the nasal cavity and perioperative bleeding [3]. With the advancement of endoscopic equipment, the endoscopic endonasal approach had popularized with a reasonably good outcome. The LASER assisted endoscopic approach had revolutionized DCR surgery, especially for cosmetic concern, precise ostium, haemostasis, and less surgical morbidity [1-2, 4-7]. Different types of LASER are used in DCR surgery and most useful with minor collateral damage. Diode laser-assisted DCR included both endoscopic and external approaches and offers many advantages over other LASER DCR and conventional DCR [4-6,8]. Skin incision sparing DCR is the current mainstay of managing congenital and acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction for young children and adults. We assessed the surgical strategies and compared the outcome of LASER DCR and conventional DCR.

Patients and Methods

This quasi interventional study had carried out in Bangladesh eye hospital and institute of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Vision eye hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh. We started the research in January 2016 and completed it on 30 June 2020. Pre-operative ophthalmic and nasal cavity evaluation and pre-anaesthetic check-up had made in all cases. All cases divided into two groups; group A and Group B. In Group A, we operated on all patients by external or conventional dacryocystorhinostomy (External DCR). In group B included all patients who had managed transcanalicular LASER dacryocystorhinostomy (TC-DCR). External DCR used for all the patients with Failed DCR. We offered External DCR and Transcanalicular LASER DCR with counselled potential advantages and disadvantages of surgical procedures in the cases of primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction. TC LASER DCR was costly than external DCR. In our study, the lowest age was 12 years, and the highest was 86 years. We excluded all the patients suspected of lacrimal neoplasm, rhinosporidiosis of

the lacrimal sac, nasal neoplasm. Anatomical success had assessed by the patency of the lacrimal passage on irrigation with normal saline. The operational success had evaluated by the absence or insignificant epiphora without any ocular and eyelid diseases. Data were collected and analyzed by Graph Pad Quick Calcs Software.

Surgical techniques

Anaesthesia

Most of the patients had operated by local anaesthesia (LA) with intravenous sedation; only two cases of group A had operated by general anaesthesia. We had used a mixture of Hyaluronidase (1500IU) mixed with bupivacaine HCL 0.5% (5 mg/ml) and lidocaine (2%) with epinephrine (0.0005%) as LA. We used plain lidocaine (2%) for hypertensive patients with chronic dacryocystitis. The LA had injected as Infratrochlear nerve block, infraorbital nerve block, ethmoidal nerve block and dorsal nasal nerve block for DCR. Intravenous sedation with 1 to 2 ml of Midazolam 1 mg/ml and Fentanyl 0.5 to 2 mcg/kg over 1-2 minutes. We sprayed 10% lignocaine solution in the nasal cavity to reduce the sensitization of nasal mucosa. In all cases, a qualified anaesthetist was present during surgery to administer intravenous drugs and monitor the patients' vitals.

Nasal Packings

A 10-15cm ribbon Gause socked with 2% Lignocaine jelly, oxymetazoline nasal drop, Inj. Adrenaline 1 ml and introduced as a posterior nasal pack throughout the surgery, and also introduced an anterior nasal packing (3-4 cm) to the middle meatus at least 5 minutes to taught nasal mucosa and also for hemostasis purpose as nasal packings.

TC LASER DCR

The TC LASER DCR system includes a 980 mm wavelength Diode LASER with a 600 µm fibre optic probe, 0° angle rigid camera-mounted nasal endoscope. The LASER fibre optic probe was used for this procedure through canaliculi to the sac. After punctual dilatation with Nettle ship punctum dilator, the laser probe was inserted horizontally into the sac through the upper punctum and canalicular system and then advanced obliquely (about 60° to 70°) vertically downward, medially and backwards, nearly the same as in lacrimal probing. Then, the probe had pushed till felt a stiff resistance was along the nasolacrimal duct to the lateral wall of the nasal cavity. A 4 mm diameter, 20 cm long 0° angled rigid camera-mounted nasal endoscope was introduced into the nasal

cavity to visualize the Laser glow of the pilot beam. The properly focused red light glow of laser (pilot) beam in the middle meatus (Figure 1a). The LASER glow will reveal the thinnest portion of the lacrimal bone, which is anterior and inferior to the insertion of the middle turbinate. The middle turbinate medialization is vital for good exposure and protection from LASER heat. A continuous contact mode of diode laser with 980 nm wavelength had used to create a nasolacrimal osteotomy by ablating the bone and mucosal tissues by pushing the beam towards the nasal cavity applying 3-4 watt of power. Both the pilot beam and 980 nm delivered Laser energy through the same LASER optical fibre. This procedure is repeated through the lower punctum and canaliculi to extend the

ostium. The osteotomy was enlarged up to 7-8 mm vertically and 5 mm horizontally by pulling up followed by pushing down the laser probe in a see-saw movement (Figure 1b). A bi-canalicular silicone lacrimal stent was introduced through both canaliculi (Figure -2) and fixed to the medial wall of anterior nares in all cases, and kept in situ up to 6 weeks of surgery. After removing all nasal packing, a piece of merocel pack (compressed dehydrated sponge composed of hydroxylated polyvinyl acetate) was introduced into the space between the middle turbinate and newly created osteotomy to prevent adhesion of middle turbinate and also to prevent the postoperative hemostasis and kept it for seven days.

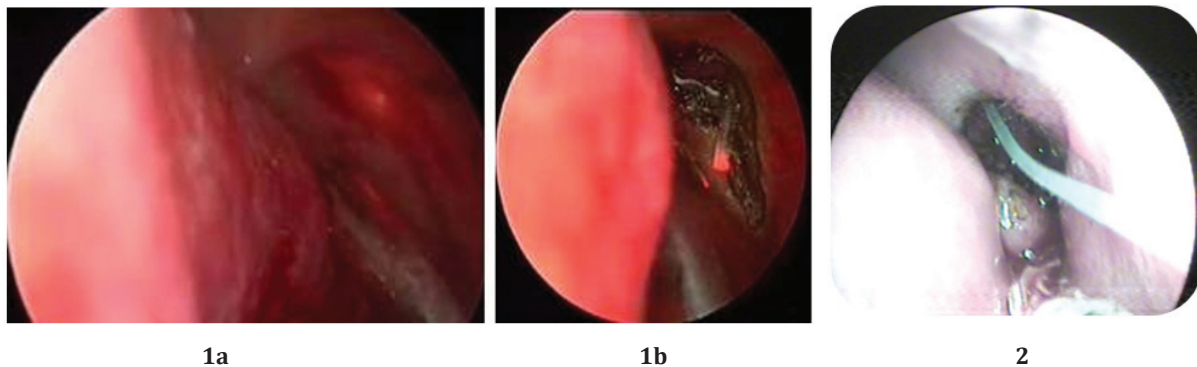


Figure 1a: The LASER glow is showing through the thinnest portion of the lacrimal bone, **b.** Making an osteotomy at the level of middle meatus by a multimode diode laser beam.

Figure 2: Intubation of bicanalicular silicone DCR tube after LASER DCR

External DCR

A J-shaped incision was given to all cases to achieve minimal or no skin scar postoperatively. Dissection had made and identified the medial palpebral ligament, making a lacrimal mucosal flap, then created a bone osteotomy by cutting the intervening bone. The nasal mucosal flap had prepared and made an anastomosis between the nasal and lacrimal mucosal flap by 6-0 vicryl (Figure-3). Used

Mitomycin C (0.02%), particularly in between the mucosal and lacrimal flaps with a surgical sponge/cotton pledge for 3 minutes and then rinsed. MMC had used in patients who had excessive granulation tissue at the surgical site. Silicone intubation was introduced in all cases and kept in the nasal cavity for six weeks of surgery. We placed a nasal pack with antibiotic ointment at the end of the surgery for 24 hours.



Figure 3: Exposure of medial palpebral ligament following skin incision, creating the nasal mucosal flap, intubation a DCR tube, and an anastomosis of Lacrimal sac mucosa and Nasal mucosal flap in external DCR.

Results

In group A, the total number of patients was 112, with 55% female and 45% male. 68 (60.7%) patients presented with PANDO, and 44 (39.3%) patients presented with failed DCR. In 112 patients, Comorbidities were in 73 (65%) patients. 24 (21.4%) Patients had taken blood thinner medication like Ecospirin, Clopidogrel. The age range was 12 years to 86 years, and the mean age 56.23 years. In Group B, all 41 patients had presented with PANDO. Comorbidities were in only 5 (12.2%) cases. The female was 27 (65.8%) cases, and the male was 14 (34.2%). The age ranges from 24 years to 67 years, and the mean age was 42.76 years. The mean operating time was 46.34 minutes in group A and 22.37 minutes in group B patients. We found the anatomical success rate in 104 cases (93%). Still, the functional success rate was noted in 96 cases (86%) in one year follow up time those operated by External DCR (Group A). We observed the anatomical and functional success rate in 34 (83%) cases of group B patients managed by TC-LASER DCR (Group B). A Sign and binomial test was performed and the P-value was highly significant (<0.0001) in both groups.

	Anatomical success	Functional Success	Anatomical Failure	Functional Failure
Group A	104 (93%)	96 (86%)	08 (7%)	16 (14%)
Group B	34 (83%)	34 (83%)	07 (17%)	07 (17%)

Table 1: Distribution of Anatomical and Functiona Outcomes of both groups.

Faint or minimal skin scar was noted in 80% of cases after six weeks of external DCR surgery (Figure-4) but reduced to only 12% after three months of surgery. No skin scar in the instances of LASER DCR surgery (Figure-5). We observed wound dehiscence in one case of group A. We found minimal postoperative nasal bleeding in 20% of cases of group A and 2% in the cases of group B. Complained moderate postoperative pain was up to 4 days of surgery in Group A and two days in group A patients. Felt minimal pain up to 10 days of surgery in group A and up to 7 days in group B patients. There was no scarring on the skin, wound dehiscence in group B patients.

The failure rate was 7% in external DCR cases (group A) and 17% in TC-LASER DCR cases (group B). The success rate depends on patients co-operation during surgery, the clinical condition of the lacrimal drainage system and nasal cavity, surgical experiences, instrumental facilities, pre-operative evaluation and management, and comorbidities. Per-operative bleeding was more in hypertension and ischaemic heart disease (IHD) patients who were taking

Anti-coagulant medication. We selected LASER DCR for the cases of primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction, especially in the younger age group and those who were sensitive to a cosmetic concern. But very recently, we were selected the elderly patients and comorbidity patients with PANDO to drain the tear from eye to nasal cavity with minimal surgical trauma and minimum operative time.

Ext DCR	No. (%)	Anatomical success	Functional Success	Anatomical Failure	Functional Failure
PANDO	68	66 (97%)	63 (92.6%)	02(3%)	05 (7.4%)
Failed DCR	44	38 (86.4%)	33 (75%)	06 (13.6%)	11 (25%)

Table 2: Distribution of the outcomes among the group A patients.



Figure 4: Minimal skin scar at the incision site after 7 days of external DCR, and 6 weeks after External DCR surgery.



Figure 5: No skin scar after LASER DCR surgery, and intubation in situ after 6 weeks of TC LASER DCR.

Discussion

External DCR is a highly successful and gold standard operation for nasolacrimal duct obstruction (NLDO). It is also an effective procedure in revision surgeries for all types of failed DCR cases [9-12]. In recent days, minimally invasive techniques and new technology-based endoscopic approaches have reported high success rates [13-17]. Both Endoscopic endonasal DCR and Transcanalicular LASER DCR procedures are the choice of surgery to avoid skin scar. There is no possibility for skin scarring, wound infection or wound dehiscence. These procedures require additional high-cost surgical equipment and visual systems and need experience in endoscope handling. Skin incision sparing LASER DCR or Endoscopic DCR is helping to preserve the lacrimal pump function by keeping the medial canthal tendon and canalicular system intact. Have minimal perioperative bleeding rates, short duration of surgery times, and quick rehabilitation times [18-21]. Transcanalicular LASER DCR is a safe and fast operative procedure with low morbidity and well-tolerated in primary acquired nasolacrimal duct obstruction. Compared to External DCR, Transcanalicular LASER DCR could do under local anaesthesia with intravenous sedation. It involves precise cutting and removal of bone, lacrimal, and nasal mucosa by ablation and creating a new opening. It is almost bloodless, less time-consuming DCR surgery, leaves no skin scars, preserves ligaments and muscles of the internal canthus, and keeps physiological lacrimal pump function. TC-laser DCR causes minimum pain and minimum nasal bleeding [13,19,22-23].

The success rate of external DCR has reported from over 89% to 98% [10-11, 24-26]. The reported success rates of transcanalicular LASER DCR vary from 52% to 96% [18-19, 22, 26-29]. The surgical success rate is 52%, 56%, 64%, 76%, and 88% in the age group of 20-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years, and 61-70 years respectively among the patients who underwent transcanalicular laser DCR with silicone tube intubations. The overall success rate is 67% [31]. The mean age was 42.76 years of transcanalicular LASER DCR (group B) in our study. The functional success rate of transcanalicular LASER DCR has reported from 68% to 80% [8, 32-35]. Recent studies have reported that the success rate in transcanalicular laser-assisted DCR with intubations ranges from 73.3% to 94.2% [36]. There are many causes for the failure of LASER DCR. Common causes are stenosis and scarring of the ostium, fibrosis at the new ostium, membrane formation over the new ostium, and canalicular stenosis resulting in obstruction of the nasolacrimal pathway [9-10]. The anatomical success is 97%

of external DCR among the patients of primary NLD obstruction and 86% in transcanalicular LASER DCR. The functional success rate is 92.6% of external DCR and 86% of LASER DCR. The overall anatomical and functional success rate of external DCR is 93% and 86%, respectively. The operational success rate was higher in primary external DCR (92.6%) than external re-DCR (75%). The overall anatomical success rate was 85% in external re-DCR [37], but our success rate is 86%. There is no significant difference statistically between the functional success rate of external DCR and transcanalicular LASER DCR [34]. Failure of transcanalicular LASER DCR is occurred due to smaller osteotomy compared to external DCR and the fibrovascular proliferation, which may cause stenosis and scarring off new ostium, especially in the younger age group [31]. New techniques and modifications have been made such as the use of mitomycin-C intraoperatively in LASER-DCR to reduce the formation of fibrovascular proliferation, which increases the success rate up to 93% [22]. Because the number of fibroblasts decreases or the fibroblasts degenerate with age, which results in less scar tissue formation, the adhesions between the middle turbinate and new osteotomy are among the causes of the failure of LASER DCR [28,38-42]. Strong expression of nasal mucosal heat shock protein 47 also leads to the formation of fibrosis and scar tissue in the young adult patient, which decreases the success rate of LASER DCR [41]. We used a merocel nasal pack between the middle turbinate and new osteotomy site to prevent the adhesion and also for haemostasis. The osteotomy size was 11.84 mm in diameter at the time of external DCR surgery, but it is reduced to the average size of 1.8 mm by ultrasonic assessment after six months of external DCR surgery [43-44]. We performed a transcanalicular LASER DCR approach due to its better surgical outcome, and LASER can applied direct to the obstructed site. We present our experience of transcanalicular LASER-assisted-DCR using 980 nm diode lasers using fibre-optic cable was used because it offers high absorption in water and oxyhemoglobin, with very efficient vaporization of bone and soft tissue, and achieves almost bloodless DCR surgery. The new osteotome was created just anterior and inferior to the middle turbinate.

Bone fractures heal more quickly in the younger patient than in older patient due to higher osteoblastic activity. Those mentioned above were the possible factors to reduce the satisfactory laser DCR due to the smaller osteotomy size [31]. In our study, the minimum osteotomy size was 10 mm in length and 10 mm wide in external DCR, and maximum of 8 mm in length and 5 mm in width in transcanalicular LASER DCR. The success rate was higher in external

DCR due to the larger osteotomy size. With increasing age, diminished microcirculation contributes to poor tissue regeneration in older patients. The mean operative time was 17.41 minutes in transcanalicular LASER DCR and 49.49 minutes in external DCR [26]. This study showed that the mean surgery time 46.34 minutes in group A (external DCR) and 22.37 minutes in group B (LASER DCR) patients. Silicone intubation at least six weeks helps increase the success rate of both external DCR and Transcanalicular LASER DCR in our cases. A recent study reported that there is no significant difference between the removal of silicone intubation after two weeks and six weeks of DCR surgeries [45]. Current ongoing investigations will further clarify the efficacy of these newer techniques and modification of surgery. Using mitomycin-C, silicone intubation, and a piece of merocel nasal pack postoperatively are likely to increase the success rate of DCR. The advantages of external DCR includes high success rates due to large osteotomy and can use it for revision surgery after failed DCR. The Success rate is higher in older age rather than younger age due to high fibroblastic activity. We are recently doing the transcanalicular LASER DCR in paediatric NLD obstruction, extreme older age, and revision surgeries after failed DCR.

Conclusions

Transcanalicular LASER DCR is a viable surgical option with minimal hazards to external DCR and overall good surgical outcome in primary nasolacrimal duct obstruction. External DCR is still the best treatment option for revision surgeries of failed DCR. Few modifications of surgery and advancement of instruments are helping to achieve the greater success rate of LASER DCR.

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