



Letter to the Editor on article: "Study on Comparative Analysis on Fistulotomy and Fistulectomy in the Management of Low Anal Fistula"

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Dear Editor

I read with great interest the publication entitled "Comparative Analysis of Fistulotomy and Fistulectomy in Managing Low Anal Fistulas" by Mohammad Shahbaz et al. (1). Authors prospectively analyzed data from 90 patients aged above 18 years with a low-lying anal fistula, comparing the outcomes of fistulotomy and fistulectomy surgery on two 45 people in each groups. Since this study is a type of clinical trial study, some points are stated regarding this issue.

1- One of the most important issues in clinical trials, especially in non-randomized clinical trials (including this study), is the use of a blinded outcome assessor. In this study, there is no explain about the outcome assessors, who checked the outcomes like visual analog scale (VAS) score, anal swelling, incontinence, and infection in the postoperative intervals between the 2 groups. Therefore, it should be considered as one of the limitations of this study.

2- In this study, the indicator of the difference between the two groups in the investigated outcome, was statistical significance ("p value"). While it would be better to use appropriated effect sizes (Odds Ratio or Standardize Mean Difference) considering the dependence of "p value" on sample size and different statistical power of statistical tests (2).

3- Since the sample size of clinical trial studies is calculated based on the primary outcome, it would be better to divide the study outcomes into primary and secondary groups (3).

Keywords: Fistulotomy, Fistulectomy, Randomized clinical trials, Rectal fistula

Conflicts of interest

Dr. Ali Reza Safarpour, as the Editorial Manager, was not involved in any stage of handling or reviewing this manuscript.

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