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Quick Response Code:



Website:

www.herniasurgeryjournal.org

DOI:

10.4103/ijawhs.ijawhs_76_24

Submitted: 14-Oct-2024

Accepted: 19-Oct-2024

Published: 30-Dec-2024

Decision regret after laparoscopic hernia repair: The “C factors”

Dear Editor,

Decision regret after laparoscopic inguinal or ventral hernia repair refers to a patient’s feelings of regret or dissatisfaction with their decision to undergo the procedure, even if the surgery itself is technically successful. Approximately 1 in 10 patients experience regret following abdominal wall hernia repair, especially with laparoscopy.^[1] Several factors may influence decision regret in this context, we are creating a mnemonic as “C factors” for easy remembrance by the surgical trainees:

1. *Postoperative “C”omplications*: If a patient experiences complications, such as chronic pain, recurrence of the hernia, seroma, or infection, they may feel regret about their decision.
2. *“C”onfused Expectations*: Patients who have unrealistic expectations about recovery time, pain levels, or the functional outcomes of the surgery may later feel disappointed, leading to regret.
3. *Inadequate “C”onsent Process*: Inadequate preoperative informed consent, in which risks, benefits, and alternative treatment options are not fully explained, can contribute to decision regret.
4. *“C”hronic Pain*: Persistent pain after laparoscopic hernia repair can lead to significant regret. Although laparoscopic repair is associated with less immediate postoperative pain, chronic pain remains a risk factor.
5. *Incomplete “C”ounseling*: If a patient’s quality of life does not improve as expected after surgery, especially concerning physical activity or comfort, they may feel regret about undergoing the procedure.
6. *“C”ost and Recovery Time*: In some cases, the financial burden of surgery or a prolonged recovery time, especially if more extensive than anticipated, may contribute to regret.
7. *“C”osmetic Outcomes*: Incisional hernias are often large, and dissatisfaction with the cosmetic result of the repair can lead to regret.

To mitigate decision regret, surgeons should ensure comprehensive preoperative

education, set realistic expectations, and engage in shared decision-making with patients.

Ethical policy and institutional review board statement

Not applicable.

Data availability statement

All data generated and/or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interests

There are no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

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1. Howard R, Ehlers A, Delaney L, Solano Q, Fry B, Englesbe M, *et al.* Incidence and trends of decision regret following elective hernia repair. *Surg Endosc* 2022;36:6609-16.

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How to cite this article: Bhattacharya K. Decision regret after laparoscopic hernia repair: The “C factors”. *Int J Abdom Wall Hernia Surg* 2024;7:193.