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Controversial role of arthroscopic meniscectomy of the knee: A review

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Abstract

The role of arthroscopic partial meniscectomy (APM) ¹in reducing pain and improving function in patients with meniscal tears remains controversial. Five recent high-quality randomized controlled trials (RCTs) compared non-operative management of meniscal tears to APM, with four showing no difference and one demonstrating superiority of APM. In this review, we examined the strengths and weaknesses of each of these RCTs, with particular attention to the occurrence of inadvertent biases. We also completed a quantitative analysis that compares treatment successes in each treatment arm, considering crossovers as treatment failures. Our analysis revealed that each study was an excellent attempt to compare APM with non-surgical treatment but suffered from selection, performance, detection, and/or transfer biases that reduce confidence in its conclusions. While the RCT remains the methodological gold standard for establishing treatment efficacy, the use of an RCT design does not in itself ensure internal or external validity. Furthermore, under our alternative analysis of treatment successes, two

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