

Treatment options for “hydiopathic short penis”: what is the evidence?



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INTRODUCTION

Penile size is becoming a healthcare problem given the increasing number of patients seeking urological advice for a so-called “short penis”. Aim of the present study was to review the level of evidence in literature for any treatment option to elongate the penis.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted through a medline search for the last 20 years on surgical and non surgical treatment modalities for penile lengthening. Peered reviewed abstracts were also included. We focused on the term “lengthening phalloplasty”, that summarises a small group of surgical procedures aimed to elongate the shaft mainly in the flaccid state. Other search terms included non invasive methods like “penile stretchers”.

RESULTS

Based on the currently available literature it appears that the most common techniques to lengthen the penis (section of the penile suspensory ligament, the infrapubic liposuction and a V-Y or Z plasty) provide only rudimentary results and a high patient dissatisfaction rate. On the other hand, literature reports mainly the disastrous results of pericavernosal apposition of autographs. In a recent technique of augmentation phalloplasty bilateral saphena grafts have been employed to increase the corpora cavernosa girth thus providing a “true” penile enlargement during erection. Interestingly, a number of peered reviewed abstracts agree that the so-called “penile stretchers” may significantly improve penile length with an extremely low complication rate.

CONCLUSIONS

Penile additive surgery remains a real controversial issue, dominated more by opinions than a scientific background. In our opinion, a more open view should be directed in the field of conservative methods of penile lengthening. Theoretically, there is no reason to believe that a penile stretcher may be less successful than surgery in elongating the suspensory ligament. Additionally, the use of non-invasive options gives the opportunity of widening considerably the indications for a treatment that, in the majority of cases, is merely cosmetic.