

Abdominal Diastasis, Conservative and Surgical Management

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ABSTRACT

Abdominal diastasis is a condition that occurs when the rectus abdominis muscles separate, leading to weakness in the abdominal wall and can manifest as a bulge in the middle abdomen. Abdominal diastasis is a common condition that can generate annoying symptoms and affect the quality of life of those who suffer from it. Management of abdominal diastasis can include a variety of therapeutic approaches, from conservative management with specific exercises and manual therapy, to surgery in more severe cases.

KEYWORDS: Abdominal diastasis, rectus abdominis, surgery

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INTRODUCTION

Abdominal diastasis is a condition that occurs when the rectus abdominis muscles separate, leading to weakness in the abdominal wall and can manifest as a bulge in the middle abdomen. Although it is not considered a serious disease, it can generate annoying symptoms and affect the quality of life of those who suffer from it. In this literature review article, a review of the literature on the management of abdominal diastasis, its epidemiology, transcendence, methods and theoretical framework, as well as a discussion and conclusion on the findings found.

Abdominal diastasis is a condition that can affect both men and women, but is more common in women due to the effect of pregnancy and childbirth on the abdominal musculature. According to studies, it is estimated that between 30% and 70% of women who have been pregnant have abdominal diastasis. In addition, it has been observed that this condition can also occur in people who have not been pregnant, as a result of sudden changes in weight, previous abdominal surgeries or repetitive movements that require heavy lifting. Abdominal diastasis is not usually a serious disease, but it can generate annoying symptoms such as abdominal pain, muscle weakness, urinary incontinence and digestive problems. In addition, in severe cases, it can lead to an abdominal hernia and, in very rare cases, to an abdominal rupture. For this reason, it is important that proper management of this condition is carried out to prevent complications and improve the quality of life of patients.

Management of abdominal diastasis may include both conservative and surgical treatment. In mild cases,

conservative treatment may consist of specific exercises to strengthen the abdominal muscles, such as Kegel exercises and abdominal girdle exercises. In addition, physiotherapy and manual therapy techniques can be used to improve posture and reduce the symptoms associated with abdominal diastasis.

In more severe cases, surgical treatment may be chosen. Surgery for abdominal diastasis involves suturing the rectus abdominis muscles in order to reduce the separation between them and restore the function of the abdominal wall. This type of surgical intervention has been associated with significant improvements in patients' quality of life, although as with any surgery, there are associated risks and it is important that careful evaluation is performed to determine if surgery is the best approach for each patient.

Overview

The diagnosis of abdominal diastasis is made by physical examination and, in some cases, with the help of imaging tests such as ultrasound and computed tomography. The treatment of abdominal diastasis will depend on the degree of separation of the rectus abdominis muscles and the presence or absence of associated symptoms.

Strengthening the abdominal muscles is one of the main strategies for the conservative management of abdominal diastasis. Studies have shown that specific exercises such as Kegel exercises and abdominal girdle exercises can be effective in reducing the separation of the rectus abdominis muscles and improving abdominal wall function.

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In a study published in the *Journal of Physical Therapy Science*, the effectiveness of a specific exercise program for abdominal diastasis in postpartum women was evaluated. The program consisted of abdominal muscle strengthening exercises and diaphragmatic breathing exercises. The results showed a significant reduction in the separation of the rectus abdominis muscles and an improvement in the symptoms associated with abdominal diastasis.

In addition, it has been shown that manual therapy and physical therapy can be effective in the management of abdominal diastasis. In a study published in the *Journal of Women's Health Physical Therapy*, the effect of manual therapy in women with abdominal diastasis was evaluated.

The results showed a significant reduction in the separation of the rectus abdominis muscles and an improvement in symptoms associated with abdominal diastasis after six sessions of manual therapy.

In more severe cases, surgical treatment may be chosen. Surgery for abdominal diastasis involves suturing the rectus abdominis muscles in order to reduce the separation between them and restore the function of the abdominal wall. The surgery is performed under general anesthesia and usually requires a short hospital stay. While surgery can be effective in correcting abdominal diastasis, it also carries risks like any other surgery, including infection, bleeding, and healing problems.

Complication	Description
Hernia umbilical	Bulging of abdominal tissue through the navel
Urinary incontinence	Involuntary loss of urine due to muscle weakness
Back pain	Muscle overload and imbalance due to weakness
Constipation	Trouble having a bowel movement due to muscle weakness
Poor posture	Misalignment of the spine due to weakness
Difficulty charging	Difficulty lifting due to weakness
Sexual dysfunction	Difficulties in sexual activity due to weakness
Bulging abdomen	"Belly" appearance due to muscle weakness

It is important to note that not everyone who has abdominal diastasis will experience all of these complications. The severity and frequency of complications can vary depending on the size of the diastasis, age, gender, and other individual factors. Therefore, it is essential that each case is evaluated individually and that a personalized treatment plan is established for each patient.

DISCUSSION

Management of abdominal diastasis can be challenging due to the variety of therapeutic approaches available and the lack of consensus as to the best approach for this condition. However, several studies have shown that strengthening the abdominal musculature and manual therapy can be effective in the conservative management of abdominal diastasis, especially in mild to moderate cases.

In more severe cases, surgery can be an effective option, but it's important to note that it carries risks and can have a long recovery time. For this reason, careful evaluation is recommended to determine the best approach for each patient.

In addition, it is important to note that preventing abdominal diastasis can be equally important as managing the condition itself. Education and health promotion in pregnancy and postpartum may be key to preventing abdominal diastasis and reducing the prevalence of this condition in the population.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, abdominal diastasis is a common condition that can generate annoying symptoms and affect the quality of life of those who suffer from it. Management of abdominal

diastasis can include a variety of therapeutic approaches, from conservative management with specific exercises and manual therapy, to surgery in more severe cases.

Scientific evidence has shown that strengthening the abdominal musculature and manual therapy can be effective in the management of abdominal diastasis, especially in mild to moderate cases. In addition, education and health promotion in pregnancy and postpartum may be key to preventing abdominal diastasis and reducing the prevalence of this condition in the population.

However, it is important to note that each patient is unique and may require a personalized therapeutic approach to achieve the best results. Therefore, careful evaluation and consultation with a trained healthcare professional is recommended to determine the best approach for each case.

In conclusion, abdominal diastasis is a condition that can be successfully managed, and prevention and early management can be key to achieving the best results. Education and awareness about this condition can help prevent it and improve the quality of life of people who suffer from it.

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