

Unsuspected uterine sarcomas undergoing morcellation: A retrospective multicenter study

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Background: Minimally invasive surgery significantly reduces mortality and morbidity at time of hysterectomy or myomectomy. The safety of morcellation however has been recently questioned due to the risk of inadvertent spread of malignant tissue and subsequent upstaging of disease.

Objective: To evaluate the incidence of unsuspected uterine sarcomas undergoing morcellation at time of hysterectomy or myomectomy

Methods: A retrospective review was performed of any form of hysterectomy or myomectomy from 1998 to 2016 in a multicenter tertiary referral health service. Patient demographics as well as the presence of morcellation were collected. All cases of confirmed uterine sarcomas were further examined and their histological subtype, patient demographics, preoperative investigations and surgical indication were also identified.

Results: A total of 7584 cases were studied. Overall 33 uterine sarcomas were identified. Of these, 7 cases were unsuspected malignancies. All 7 cases were leiomyosarcomas. None of the malignant specimens underwent morcellation. The overall incidence of uterine sarcomas in the total study population was 0.44%. The rate of unsuspected uterine sarcomas in women undergoing hysterectomy or myomectomy for presumed benign indications was 0.13% or 1 in 769. The rate of unintended morcellation of a uterine sarcoma in our center was 0%. The diagnosis of endometrial sarcoma was prompted by endometrial sampling in 33% of the cases.

Conclusions: The risk of inadvertent morcellation of unsuspected uterine sarcomas is very low. Patients should be appropriately selected with adequate investigations and a detailed history and examination prior to surgery. Further studies are needed to identify effective preoperative screening methods for uterine sarcomas as well as a focus on developing improved techniques for contained morcellation.

Keywords : Morcellation, Fibroids, Uterine Sarcoma, laparoscopy

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