An integrated Surgery-IVF approach for management of endometriosis-associated infertility in selected patients

Abstract ID : 4863
Submitted by : giulia orlandi the 2019-02-16 01:13:34
Nommage interne selon la nomenclature personnalisée :
Category : Endometriosis/Endometrium
Additional category : I want to participate in the "Young investigator contest" and I certify to be under 35 years old. If you are selected, an ID will be requested on site.
Typology : Communication orale / Oral communication
Status : Validated
Authorisation to disclose : Yes/Oui

Introduction and objectives
Endometriosis affects 5-10% of women during reproductive age, 30%-50% of these women are infertile. There are few data in literature about infertile women who undergo surgery.
Laparoscopy is considered the gold standard for treatment of endometriosis. In vitro fertilization and embryo transfer (IVF-ET) is often used to treat women with infertility associated with endometriosis. The objective of the study was to evaluate the pregnancy rate after surgical treatment and to assess whether a combined approach with laparoscopic surgery followed by IVF ET can improve the 'overall' pregnancy rate.

Methods
In our retrospective observational study we recruited 270 infertile patients, between 1993 and 2017, who underwent laparoscopic surgery for endometriosis. Pregnancy rate was evaluated after surgery and surgery-IVF integrated approach. Results of spontaneous pregnancies were stratified according to Endometriosis fertility index (EFI).

Results
The spontaneous pregnancy rate after surgery was 30.4% (82/270). When analyzing results according to EFI, in patients with EFI between 0 and 4, cumulative spontaneous pregnancy rate was 32%, significantly lower than EFI 5-6, 55%. After surgery, 139 women attempted IVF-ET and obtained a pregnancy in 58 cases (41.7%) (p<0.05).

Discussion
Surgery showed a valuable option for younger infertile patients with a diagnosis of endometriosis. Integrated Surgery-IVF-ET treatment represent the most successful treatment of endometriosis-associated infertility. For older patients, with a more severe disease, IVF-ET as first line treatment might be more effective.

Keywords : endometriosis, ART, IVF, laparoscopy
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