8th WORLD CONGRESS of PEDIATRIC SURGERY
WOFAPS
12-15 November 2025
Titanic Mardan Palace Hotel
ANTALYA, TÜRKİYE

Pediatric Esophageal Replacement: A 34-Year Single-Center Experience in a Middle-Income Setting

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Introduction

Esophagoplasty in children represents one of the major surgical challenges, requiring a multidisciplinary approach. Currently, several alternatives exist for esophageal substitutes, each with its own advantages and disadvantages..

To describe our experience with esophagocoloplasty in children in terms of outcomes in the short and long term

Materiel and methods

A retrospective, descriptive study, including patients who underwent esophageal replacement surgery
At the pediatric surgery department at Fattouma Bourguiba University Hospital in Monastir,
A Period of 34 years, from January 1990 to December 2024

Results

- 48 patients were included in our study, with a mean age of 55.5 months, and a male predominance.
- Caustic stenosis was the main indication for esophageal replacement (84.6%), followed by esophageal atresia in 7 cases.
- The isoperistaltic transverse colon, pedicled on the left colic vessels, was chosen for all our patients

- The graft route was the posterior mediastinum in all cases.
- Esophagectomy with a closed thorax was performed simultaneously by stripping in 38 patients and a thoracotomy was needed to perform the esophagectomy in only one patien.
- The native esophagus was left in place in 4 patients.

Postoperavtive complications	Percentage of observations(%)
Pneumothorax	68,7
Inspiratory dyspnea	6,2
Pulmonary Infection	27
Pulmonary atelectasia	25
Pleural efusion	6,2
Mediastinitis	10,4
Dysphonia	31,2
Cervical fistulas	14,5

- **Morbidity rate** was ***68,7%*** and the **mortality rate was 6.2%.**
- The main long-term complications: **Cervical anastomotic stenoses (7 cases) and gastrocolic reflux (9 cases).**
- The mean follow-up was 8.4 years, with satisfactory functional outcomes in 70.8% of patients.

Conclusion

Our experience showed that, despite its complexity and relatively high morbidity, esophagocoloplasty in children is associated with low mortality and satisfactory medium- and long-term outcomes