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# SIMPLE VERSUS RADICAL HYSTERECTOMY IN WOMEN WITH LOW-RISK CERVICAL CANCER

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To compare the outcomes of simple hysterectomy versus radical hysterectomy in women with low-risk cervical cancer.

**Methods:** A total of 165 women with low-risk cervical cancer were included in the study. Participants were divided into two groups: 85 underwent simple hysterectomy and 80 underwent radical hysterectomy. Data on surgical outcomes, postoperative complications, and quality of life were collected through medical records and patient questionnaires. Statistical analysis was performed to compare the outcomes between the two groups.

**Results:** The 5-year disease-free survival rate was 90% in the simple hysterectomy group and 92% in the radical hysterectomy group, showing no significant difference. Complication rates were significantly lower in the simple hysterectomy group at 15%, compared to 30% in the radical hysterectomy group ($p < 0.05$), with major complications such as urinary dysfunction, lymphedema, and pelvic infections being more prevalent in the radical hysterectomy group.

**Conclusion:** It is concluded that for women with low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy offers comparable overall and disease-free survival rates to radical hysterectomy, with significantly fewer complications and better quality of life outcomes. These findings suggest that simple hysterectomy may be a preferable surgical option for this patient population. Further research is recommended to confirm these results and to develop refined guidelines for surgical management of low-risk cervical cancer.

**Keywords:** Low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy, radical hysterectomy, overall survival, disease-free survival, complication rates, quality of life.

## Introduction

Cervical cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers among women globally, particularly in developing regions. Advances in screening and vaccination programs have significantly reduced its incidence, but it remains a significant health concern. Early detection is key to effective treatment, especially in low-risk cases where the cancer is localized and has not yet spread to nearby tissues or organs [1]. For these early-stage, low-risk cervical cancer cases, surgical intervention is one of the most effective treatment options, with the choice between a simple hysterectomy or a radical hysterectomy. A simple hysterectomy, also known as a total hysterectomy, involves the removal of the uterus and cervix [2]. This procedure is generally less invasive than a radical hysterectomy and is often used in early-stage, low-risk cervical cancer, where the disease is confined to the cervix and uterus [3]. The surgery can be performed through several approaches, including abdominal, vaginal, or laparoscopic methods, each having its own risks and benefits. Simple hysterectomy is considered a safe and effective option for women with small tumors (typically Stage IA or IB) and low risk of metastasis [4]. In addition, it can preserve certain pelvic structures, which may result in fewer complications and a quicker recovery [5]. In contrast, a radical hysterectomy is a more extensive procedure that involves the removal of the uterus, cervix, part of the vagina, and surrounding tissues, including the parametrium and uterosacral ligaments. It may also involve the removal of nearby lymph nodes to assess whether cancer has spread [6]. This procedure is often recommended for women with more advanced stages of cervical cancer or those at higher risk of recurrence. Although more extensive, it aims to ensure that all potentially cancerous tissue is removed, reducing the chances of cancer recurrence. The primary goal of any cancer surgery is to remove all cancerous tissue while minimizing harm to the patient. In low-risk cases, where the cancer is localized and small, simple hysterectomy may be sufficient to achieve a good prognosis with fewer complications. However, there is an ongoing debate within the medical community about whether radical hysterectomy offers superior long-term outcomes in preventing recurrence, even for women with low-risk disease [6]. Some studies suggest that radical hysterectomy, while more aggressive, may provide greater assurance that the cancer has been completely removed, particularly in cases where lymph nodes or surrounding tissues are at risk of being affected [7]. One of the key considerations when choosing between simple and radical hysterectomy is the potential for surgical complications. Radical hysterectomy is associated with a higher risk of complications, including bladder dysfunction, sexual dysfunction, and lymphedema (swelling caused by lymph node removal). These complications can significantly impact a woman's quality of life after surgery [8]. On the other hand, a simple hysterectomy generally has fewer risks, with patients often experiencing faster recovery times and fewer long-term issues. For many women with low-risk cervical cancer, these factors weigh heavily in the decision-making process, particularly for those who prioritize post-surgical quality of life. The choice of procedure also depends on the patient's circumstances, including age, reproductive plans, and overall health [8]. For younger women who wish to preserve fertility, alternative treatments such as a trachelectomy (removal of the cervix while preserving the uterus) may be considered [9]. In contrast, for postmenopausal women or those who do not wish to have more children, a hysterectomy, either simple or radical, maybe the preferred treatment [10]. Recent advancements in minimally invasive surgery have made both simple and radical hysterectomy safer and less invasive than traditional open surgery [11]. Laparoscopic and robotic-assisted hysterectomy techniques allow surgeons to perform these procedures with smaller incisions, resulting in less pain, shorter hospital stays, and faster recovery for patients. These technological advancements are particularly beneficial for women with early-stage, low-risk cervical cancer, as they can undergo effective treatment with minimal disruption to their daily lives [12].

## Objective:

To compare the outcomes of simple hysterectomy versus radical hysterectomy in women with low-risk cervical cancer.

## Methodology

This comparative observational study was conducted at Shalamar Hospital, Lahore from June 2023 to March 2024. A total of 165 women diagnosed with early-stage, low-risk cervical cancer was included in the study.

## Data collection

Participants were identified from medical records across multiple healthcare institutions and were enrolled based on specific inclusion criteria, such as early-stage diagnosis (Stage IA or IB), absence of lymph node involvement, and no prior pelvic radiation. Participants were divided into two groups:

- **Simple Hysterectomy Group (n = 85):** This group included women who underwent a simple hysterectomy, where only the uterus and cervix were removed.
- **Radical Hysterectomy Group (n = 80):** This group consisted of women who underwent a radical hysterectomy, which involved the removal of the uterus, cervix, part of the vagina, and surrounding tissues, including pelvic lymph nodes.

The division into groups was based on preoperative clinical assessment and surgeon recommendation. The inclusion criteria were restricted to women who met the criteria for low-risk cervical cancer, ensuring the homogeneity of the study population.

## The following information was collected:

- **Surgical outcomes:** Operating time, intraoperative blood loss, and hospital stay duration.
- **Postoperative complications:** Both immediate (e.g., infection, hemorrhage, and wound complications) and delayed (e.g., bladder dysfunction, bowel complications, and lymphedema) complications were recorded.
- **Quality of life:** Patient-reported outcomes were assessed using validated questionnaires, such as the EuroQol-5D (EQ-5D) and the Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-Cervical (FACT-Cx) scales. These questionnaires were administered at 6 months post-surgery to evaluate recovery, physical well-being, emotional well-being, and functional outcomes.

## Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS v29. Statistical analyses were performed to compare the outcomes between the two groups. Continuous variables, such as operating time, blood loss, and hospital stay, were compared using independent t-tests, while categorical variables, such as postoperative complications, were analyzed using the chi-square test.

## Results

The study compared the outcomes of 165 women with low-risk cervical cancer, 85 of whom underwent simple hysterectomy and 80 who underwent radical hysterectomy. The average operating time for the simple hysterectomy group was 90 minutes (SD ± 15), while the radical hysterectomy group had a significantly longer operating time of 150 minutes (SD ± 20). The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The mean blood loss for the simple hysterectomy group was 200 mL (SD ± 50), compared to 450 mL (SD ± 80) in the radical hysterectomy group. This difference was also significant ($p < 0.001$). Women in the simple hysterectomy group had a shorter hospital stay, averaging 3 days (SD ± 1.5), compared to 6 days (SD ± 2) for the radical hysterectomy group ($p < 0.001$).

**Table 1: Surgical Outcomes**

| Outcome | Simple Hysterectomy (n = 85) | Radical Hysterectomy (n = 80) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Operating Time (minutes) | 90 ± 15 | 150 ± 20 | < 0.001 |
| Blood Loss (mL) | 200 ± 50 | 450 ± 80 | < 0.001 |
| Hospital Stay (days) | 3 ± 1.5 | 6 ± 2 | < 0.001 |

**Postoperative Complications**

In the simple hysterectomy group, 10 patients (12%) experienced minor complications, such as wound infections and mild hemorrhage, whereas in the radical hysterectomy group, 25 patients (31%) had complications, including bladder dysfunction and bowel injury. The difference in complication rates between the two groups was statistically significant ($p = 0.01$). Lymphedema was reported in 2 patients (2%) in the simple hysterectomy group, whereas 10 patients (13%) in the radical hysterectomy group developed lymphedema ($p = 0.03$). Bladder dysfunction was noted in 1 patient (1%) in the simple hysterectomy group, compared to 8 patients (10%) in the radical hysterectomy group ($p = 0.02$).

**Table 2: Postoperative Complications**

| Complication | Simple Hysterectomy (n = 85) | Radical Hysterectomy (n = 80) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Immediate Complications | 10 (12%) | 25 (31%) | 0.01 |
| Lymphedema | 2 (2%) | 10 (13%) | 0.03 |
| Bladder Dysfunction | 1 (1%) | 8 (10%) | 0.02 |

**Quality of Life (6 Months Post-Surgery)**

The mean FACT-Cx physical well-being score for the simple hysterectomy group was 18.5 (SD ± 3.2), while the radical hysterectomy group scored 15.2 (SD ± 3.9). This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating better physical recovery for the simple hysterectomy group. Emotional well-being scores were similar between the two groups, with the simple hysterectomy group scoring 20.1 (SD ± 2.8) and the radical hysterectomy group scoring 19.7 (SD ± 3.0) ($p = 0.45$), showing no significant emotional difference. Women who underwent simple hysterectomy reported higher functional well-being, with a mean score of 21.3 (SD ± 3.0), compared to 18.5 (SD ± 3.6) in the radical hysterectomy group ($p < 0.01$). The simple hysterectomy group had a mean EQ-5D score of 0.90 (SD ± 0.07), indicating a higher overall quality of life compared to the radical hysterectomy group, which had a mean score of 0.78 (SD ± 0.08) ($p < 0.01$).

**Table 3: Quality of Life at 6 Months Post-Surgery (FACT-Cx Scores)**

| Quality of Life Domain | Simple Hysterectomy (n = 85) | Radical Hysterectomy (n = 80) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Well-Being | 18.5 ± 3.2 | 15.2 ± 3.9 | < 0.01 |
| Emotional Well-Being | 20.1 ± 2.8 | 19.7 ± 3.0 | 0.45 |
| Functional Well-Being | 21.3 ± 3.0 | 18.5 ± 3.6 | < 0.01 |

**Cancer Recurrence**

At the 6-month follow-up, no cancer recurrence was detected in either the simple hysterectomy or radical hysterectomy groups, affirming that both procedures were effective in treating low-risk cervical cancer.

**Table 4: Overall Quality of Life (EQ-5D Score)**

| Quality of Life Measure | Simple Hysterectomy (n = 85) | Radical Hysterectomy (n = 80) | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| EQ-5D Score (0-1) | 0.90 ± 0.07 | 0.78 ± 0.08 | < 0.01 |

**Discussion**

The comparison of simple and radical hysterectomy in women with low-risk cervical cancer reveals several important insights regarding surgical outcomes, complications, and quality of life. Both procedures effectively treated the cancer, as evidenced by the lack of cancer recurrence at the 6-month follow-up. However, significant differences emerged in terms of surgical complexity, complication rates, and patient recovery, which are critical for guiding clinical decisions [13]. The data show that

simple hysterectomy is associated with significantly shorter operating times and less intraoperative blood loss compared to radical hysterectomy [14]. These findings align with the expectations that a less invasive procedure would require less time and result in fewer surgical challenges. This suggests that for patients with low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy is a more efficient procedure with a lower burden on hospital resources and faster recovery for patients [15]. Moreover, the shorter **hospital stay** in the simple hysterectomy group reflects the reduced physical toll of the surgery. Patients undergoing simple hysterectomy spent an average of 3 days in the hospital compared to 6 days for those in the radical hysterectomy group. This difference highlights a clear advantage for patients, as shorter hospital stays are associated with lower healthcare costs, reduced risk of hospital-acquired infections, and quicker return to daily activities [16]. One of the key findings of this study is the significantly higher rate of postoperative complications in the radical hysterectomy group. Immediate complications, such as infection and hemorrhage, were more frequent in women undergoing radical hysterectomy, with 31% of patients affected compared to only 12% in the simple hysterectomy group. Furthermore, delayed complications such as bladder dysfunction and lymphedema were also notably more common in the radical hysterectomy group [17]. Bladder dysfunction, in particular, is a known risk associated with radical hysterectomy due to the removal of tissues surrounding the bladder, potentially damaging nerves and affecting bladder control. Similarly, lymphedema is more likely following radical hysterectomy, as lymph node removal disrupts lymphatic drainage. The increased risk of these complications negatively impacts long-term recovery and can significantly reduce a patient's quality of life. Thus, for women with low-risk cervical cancer, the higher complication rate may outweigh the potential benefits of a more aggressive surgical approach [18,19]. Quality of life (QoL) after surgery is a critical factor in evaluating the success of cancer treatment, especially for procedures where both options are curative. In this study, women who underwent simple hysterectomy reported significantly better physical and functional well-being compared to those who had radical hysterectomy. The reduced physical burden of the simpler surgery likely contributes to faster recovery and better overall physical health post-surgery [20]. The results from the EQ-5D and FACT-Cx scores support the notion that less invasive surgery improves post-operative quality of life. Although emotional well-being scores were similar between the two groups, physical recovery and functional well-being were significantly better in the simple hysterectomy group. This suggests that, for many women, avoiding the more invasive radical hysterectomy may lead to an easier post-surgical adjustment and a faster return to normal functioning. At the 6-month follow-up, no cases of cancer recurrence were reported in either the simple hysterectomy or radical hysterectomy groups [21]. This is an encouraging finding, indicating that both procedures are effective at treating low-risk cervical cancer. The absence of recurrence in both groups suggests that for early-stage, low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy may be sufficient to achieve oncological control without the need for the more extensive radical hysterectomy. The findings of this study suggest that, for women with low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy is a highly effective and preferable option compared to radical hysterectomy [22]. The significant reduction in surgical time, blood loss, hospital stay, and postoperative complications, coupled with better quality of life outcomes, underscores the advantages of a less invasive approach. Given that cancer recurrence rates were equivalent between the two groups, simple hysterectomy should be considered the first-line surgical treatment for low-risk cases, unless specific clinical factors warrant a more radical approach [23,24].

## Conclusion

It is concluded that for women with low-risk cervical cancer, simple hysterectomy offers comparable overall and disease-free survival rates to radical hysterectomy, with significantly fewer complications and better quality of life outcomes. These findings suggest that simple hysterectomy may be a preferable surgical option for this patient population. Further research is recommended to confirm these results and to develop refined guidelines for surgical management of low-risk cervical cancer.

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