# Commentary: Subjective outcomes and quality of life following external dacryocystorhinostomy

Lacrimal drainage disorders have complex physical, functional, and psychosocial impacts on the patient's quality of life. Hence, the evaluation of posttreatment outcomes should extend far beyond the routine anatomical and functional success. Several quality-of-life questionnaires or scoring systems with numerous parameters have been used and validated for lacrimal disorders. They include Glasgow Benefit Inventory (GBI), the nasolacrimal duct obstruction symptom score (NLDO-SS), lacrimal symptom questionnaire (Lac-Q), ocular surface diseased index (OSDI), and the visual function questionnaire (VFQ-25).[1]

While the GBI is a good measure of QOL for several disorders across specialties, it is not specific to the need-based assessment of lacrimal disorders and can be confounded by the coexisting systemic factors. Besides, it is difficult to interpret it accurately and does not reflect the pre-interventional morbidity. Hence, it has significant limitations and limited reliability in patients with epiphora and is not recommended beyond retrospective studies.[2]

The Lac-Q specifically evaluates four lacrimal parameters (watery eye, sticky eye, soreness of eyelids, and swelling of the medial canthus) and five social impact items [Table 1]. Both these subscales have good internal consistency and correlate well with patient outcomes for lacrimal disorders.[3,4] However, more data are required on its validity and item-response scores.

The NLDO-SS specifically evaluates six lacrimal parameters (tearing, irritation, pain, discharge, swelling, and visual acuity) on a scale of 0 (no symptoms) to 10 (severe symptoms). It is a disease-specific score that is responsive to change with good internal consistency. However, certain items within the questionnaire perform poorly and need further validation.[2]

Certain other questionnaires like the OSDI, VFQ-25, Feretis symptom improvement score, Cheung questionnaire, and Yeniad ocular symptom score have significant limitations in the context of epiphora evaluation (more so when secondary to lacrimal drainage obstructions) and are not recommended until further testing and development.[2]

**Table 1: Overview of the Lac-Q parameters**

| Lacrimal parameters | Social parameters |
|---|---|
| 1. Watery eye | 1. Watery eye comment by family or friends |
| 2. Soreness of eyelids | 2. Watery eye causing embarrassment |
| 3. Sticky eye | 3. Watery eye interfering with daily activities |
| 4. Swelling at medial canthus | 4. Watery eye causing blurred vision |
| | 5. Medical consultation for watery eye |

Although useful data exist on patient-related outcomes from several studies on lacrimal disorders, there is a lack of high-quality evidence to judge any of them as a singular robust measure of QOL. It is crucial to understand the utility and limitations of patient-related outcome measures, which would improve the prospects of developing better measures.

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