Author's response to reviews

Title: A comparison of vas occlusion techniques: cautery more effective than ligation and excision with fascial interposition

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to thank Dr. Hargreave for his constructive and helpful comments. In response to Dr. Hargreave’s comments, I have made the following changes:

1) Regarding possible differences in fascial interposition techniques: I have added some text in the conclusions and discussions to note that another limitation of the study is: “…differences in methods of fascial interposition between the two studies;”

I have also added some text in the discussion to explicitly mention his suggestion that cautery may be less technique-dependent than fascial interposition. “Results from this comparative analysis suggest that cautery may be a more robust and less technique-dependent method than fascial interposition.”

2) Added text in the discussion to note the issue about the length of cauterized vas and potential difficulty in reversal with long cauterized segments.

3) Regarding Dr. Hargreave’s remarks about the timing of the difference in sperm clearance, I have deleted Figure 3, since it seems to present a misleading picture. The marked difference in Figure 3 at the 2-week time point is probably due to the lack of centrifugation in the cautery study, and men with very low sperm counts being counted as azoospermic. The difference in clearance leading to the difference in failure rates is probably not as early as figure 3 suggests.

If you look at Figure 1, I think a important difference is apparent, on the high end of sperm counts, and it shows up at the 8 to 10 week time point. I have added the following text in the results under the “sperm concentration” section: “The difference in early failures can be appreciated by examining the percentages of men with high sperm concentrations. In the fascial interposition study, the percentage of men with sperm counts of 10 million or more – in red – stays about the same from 6 to 26 weeks. But in the cautery study, the percentage decreases dramatically from 5 to 8 to 12 weeks. This difference is probably due to recanalizations which become apparent in the first 6 to 10 weeks after the procedure.”

Sincerely yours,

David C. Sokal, MD