

Long-term follow-up after treatment of common bile duct stones by extracorporeal shock-wave lithotripsy

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BACKGROUND AND STUDY AIMS: The efficacy of extracorporeal shock-wave lithotripsy (ESWL) of difficult bile duct stones that were not amenable to routine endoscopic extraction was assessed, with evaluation of the long-term follow-up after successful treatment. **PATIENTS AND METHODS:** Fifty-four patients (mean age 74 years, range 33-92) were treated with ESWL for difficult bile duct stones. Treatment was performed either with the Dornier HM3 kidney lithotripter (49 patients) or with the MPL 9000 lithotripter (five patients). **RESULTS:** Stone disintegration was achieved in 50 patients (93%), with complete stone clearance in 45 patients (83%) (mean 1.2 session). Patients with successful stone removal after one session had significantly smaller stones than patients with treatment failure (20 +/- 9 versus 27 +/- 8 mm; $p < 0.05$). An intrahepatic location of stones was significantly associated with treatment failure ($p < 0.005$). Severe complications occurred in 7% (procedure-related 5%), with a 30-day mortality rate of 0% (in-hospital mortality rate of 2%). Minor side effects such as fever, petechiae, and mild arrhythmias were frequent (37%), and microhematuria (95%) occurred in nearly all of the patients. Symptomatic recurrent bile duct stones were observed in two patients (5%) after three and four years, respectively (mean follow-up 5.3 years). **CONCLUSION:** Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy represents a safe and effective treatment modality for difficult bile duct stones, with a low rate of symptomatic recurrences.

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