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**WHERE'S WALDO'S SCAR? A COVERT APPROACH TO THE UMBILICAL HERNIA REPAIR**

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**Background:**

Incomplete closure of the umbilical fascial opening after the age of 5 requires surgical closure, conventionally via infra-umbilical incision. We piloted an innovative umbilical hernia repair via a trans-umbilical incision.

**Objective:**

We hypothesize that this technique will improve cosmetics and reduce operative time.

**Methods:**

We completed a cross sectional comparison within the 90 umbilical hernia repairs between 2017 and 2018. The main outcomes; cosmetics assessed using post-operative photos and operative time, calculated from OR data were compared between 80 repairs using conventional approach and 10 repairs using the innovative technique with a Mann-Whitney U test.

**Results:**

The technique: A longitudinal incision through the midline of the umbilicus. A plane at the level of the linea-alba, is defined and the hernia sac is either dissected, divided or imbricated. The edges of the defect are clearly defined and closed in a vertical direction with interrupted absorbable suture. The excess skin is removed and closed with a fine absorbable suture with a subcuticular horizontal mattress technique. Compared to the conventional method, the innovative technique was associated with a non-statistically significant 5 minute shorter operating time ( $24 \pm 11$  vs  $29 \pm 11$  mins,  $p=0.13$ ). Data for cosmetic appearance will be presented at the meeting. No major adverse events were reported.

**Conclusion:**

The trans-umbilical approach is a safe and effective way to repair an umbilical hernia in the pediatric population that may be associated with shorter operative time and improve cosmetics.