

Peer Review

Review of: "Embryological Development of Anorectal Malformations: A Hypothesis"

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Abstract:

I would consider removing sentences that sound accusatory towards clinicians. "Claims made by clinicians contradict established scientific data," and "poor outcomes are the result of unnecessary and mutilating surgeries."

Can you organize the abstract into a format? Currently, there is just a section labeled results and conclusions.

I disagree that patients with persistent cloaca have a normal bladder and urethra. Sometimes, but often, the urethra/bladder neck can be very abnormal in long common channels. Hydrocolpos, in my experience, doesn't have anything to do with the rectal fistula, but rather from the reflux of urine into the vagina(s).

Introduction:

Be careful about labeling things as undeniable facts in embryology and medicine.

I disagree with 2.2; fistulae are not always in the central plane, and posterior cloacas exist.

2.3 I would change invisible fistulas to fistulae not evident on perineal exam, such as rectourethral or rectovaginal.

3.2 Anopenile fistula is not a term that I would use. Please describe as rectourethral, bulbar, prostatic? If there is a urethral opening to the perineum, I would consider this a urethral duplication.

4.2.2 This paragraph is not consistent with how urologists view the urinary system in cloaca at all today. Hydrocolpos is, in fact, from refluxing urine. I

I'm not sure what the author believes this to be from. Pena and all urologists do not only attribute voiding dysfunction to congenital pathology; we acknowledge this plays a role, as does urogenital mobilization and often concomitant spinal defects. The urethra and vagina are separated for many reasons, including the ability to catheterize, menstruate, have intercourse, reduce vaginal voiding/improve continence, etc.

Overall, this is a very disorganized review of sorts that doesn't make clear conclusions. It's not clear how they're defining high and low fistulae, or why this is important. There's a lot of colloquial language ("so-called" in heading titles). There are no true results here, and it is unclear whether the author is trying to make this into a primary study as well.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.