



**“THE VERSATILITY OF THE TONGUE FLAP IN THE
CLOSURE OF PALATAL FISTULAE- A RETROSPECTIVE
STUDY”**

By

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ABSTRACT

Aims:

Tongue flaps were introduced for intra-oral reconstruction by Ilexer in 1909. A retrospective study was carried out in the department of oral and maxillofacial surgery, S.D.M. College of Dental Sciences, to assess the use of tongue flap in closure of palatal fistula.

Material and Methods:

A total of 40 patients treated for palatal fistulas in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, S.D.M. College of Dental Sciences, Dharwad were included in this study from the period of 1st January 2000- 1st January 2007, fistulae present in anterior and mid palate were considered. Patient's pre operative photographs, clinical records and pre operative speech analysis were recorded. Following completion of fistulae closure patient is assessed over a period of at least six months to check flap viability fistulae closure, residual tongue function aesthetics and speech impediment.

Results:

A total of 40 patients with palatal fistulae were treated with tongue flap in our study 24 male patients and 16 females. In our study there were 6 patients in the range of 4-6 year, 3 patients in the range of 7 – 10 years, highest being in the range of 11 – 20 years (22 patients) which accounts for 68 % of study subjects. Whereas there were 9 patients in the range of 21 – 30 years. In early post operative we encountered bleeding in one patient and sloughing in one patient. There are 3 recurrences and 2 flaps were detached, remaining all cases showed satisfactory healing, donor site morbidity was minimal. No speech deficits were evident

Conclusion:

Tongue flaps in cleft palate surgery because of its excellent vascularity and the large amount of tissue that they provide have rendered tongue flaps particularly appropriate for the repair of large fistulae in palates scarred by previous surgery