

THE REDUCTION IN THE LENGTH OF NECK INCISION WITH THYROID SURGERY DOES NOT IMPROVE PATIENT SATISFACTION

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Background/Purpose: Postoperative cosmesis in the neck is a major concern of patients undergoing thyroid surgery. It seems obvious that the patients will be more satisfied with the long-term cosmetic appearance of smaller thyroidectomy scar incision. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the length of scar of the conventional thyroid surgery and patient satisfaction.

Methods: The anonymous scar assessment questionnaire was given to patients who had conventional thyroid surgery. The 2,041 patients were asked to rate their satisfaction with their scars on a 10 point Likert scale (with 1 being very unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied). The patients were analyzed in two groups; group 1, patients with thyroidectomy only (n = 1,836) and group 2, patients with thyroidectomy with unilateral lateral neck dissection (n = 205).

Results: There were no differences in gender, age, time after operation at assessment. Mean satisfaction score was not different between two groups (7.36 \pm 2.53 vs. 7.01 \pm 2.65, p = 0.076). No significant correlation was observed between scar length and patient satisfaction in group 1 and group 2 (ρ = 0.018, p value = 0.450 and ρ = - 0.082, p value = 0.243).

Discussion & Conclusion: The length of incision in patients with thyroid surgery appears to have no association with patient's satisfaction. Therefore, the length of incision may not be critical factors for decision making especially in thyroid cancer surgery.