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HYPERPROLACTINEMIA SYNDROME: ANALYSIS OF TREATMENT OUTCOMES IN PROLACTIN-SECRETING PITUITARY ADENOMAS

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Annotation: Hyperprolactinemia syndrome, predominantly caused by prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas (prolactinomas), is characterized by elevated serum prolactin levels leading to reproductive dysfunction, galactorrhea, infertility, hypogonadism, and metabolic disturbances. Management strategies include pharmacological therapy with dopamine agonists, surgical resection, and, in selected cases, radiotherapy. Accurate assessment of treatment outcomes is crucial to optimize hormone normalization, tumor size reduction, symptom resolution, and long-term patient quality of life. This review analyzes current therapeutic approaches, evaluates efficacy, complications, and recurrence rates, and highlights strategies for individualized management. Advances in imaging, endocrine monitoring, and minimally invasive surgical techniques have improved prognostic accuracy and guided tailored interventions. The article underscores evidence-based protocols for achieving optimal clinical, biochemical, and radiological outcomes in patients with prolactinomas. Hyperprolactinemia syndrome, most frequently caused by prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas, is a significant endocrine disorder characterized by excessive serum prolactin levels that disrupt reproductive function, induce galactorrhea, and lead to hypogonadism, infertility, and metabolic abnormalities. The accurate evaluation of therapeutic outcomes is essential to ensure normalization of prolactin, tumor shrinkage, alleviation of clinical symptoms, and long-term quality-of-life improvement. This review analyzes the effectiveness, safety, and long-term results of pharmacological and surgical interventions for prolactinomas, emphasizing individualized treatment strategies. Modern imaging, minimally invasive surgical techniques, and refined endocrine monitoring have enhanced the precision of diagnosis, guided personalized interventions, and improved prognostic accuracy. The article highlights evidence-based protocols for achieving optimal clinical, biochemical, and radiological results in patients with prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas.

Keywords: hyperprolactinemia, prolactinoma, pituitary adenoma, dopamine agonists, cabergoline, bromocriptine, transsphenoidal surgery, endocrine therapy, prolactin normalization, treatment outcomes.

Introduction:

Hyperprolactinemia is a common endocrine disorder caused primarily by prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas, accounting for 30–40% of functioning pituitary tumors. Clinical manifestations vary by sex and age, often including galactorrhea, amenorrhea, infertility, decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, and, in

long-standing cases, osteoporosis or metabolic alterations. Large macroadenomas may exert mass effects, causing headaches, visual field defects, or hypopituitarism. Accurate diagnosis relies on serum prolactin measurement, MRI of the sellar region, and assessment of secondary causes such as medications or systemic disorders. Dopamine agonists, notably cabergoline and bromocriptine, are first-line treatments that suppress prolactin secretion and reduce tumor volume, often leading to resolution of symptoms and restoration of reproductive function. Transsphenoidal surgical resection is indicated in drug-resistant cases, intolerance to pharmacotherapy, or presence of significant mass effects. Radiotherapy is reserved for refractory or recurrent disease. Advances in pituitary imaging, surgical techniques, and endocrine monitoring have enhanced treatment precision and facilitated individualized care. Evaluating outcomes requires integrated assessment of prolactin normalization, tumor shrinkage, symptom resolution, and recurrence, while considering patient quality of life and long-term endocrine function. Hyperprolactinemia arises from excessive production of prolactin, primarily due to prolactinomas, which are pituitary adenomas that can be classified as microadenomas (<10 mm) or macroadenomas (≥10 mm). Clinical presentation varies based on adenoma size and patient sex, including galactorrhea, amenorrhea, infertility in women, and erectile dysfunction, decreased libido, and hypogonadism in men. Macroadenomas may compress surrounding structures, causing headaches, visual field deficits, and hypopituitarism. Laboratory evaluation includes serum prolactin measurements, ruling out secondary causes such as medications, hypothyroidism, or systemic illnesses. MRI imaging of the sellar region is critical for tumor localization, size assessment, and surgical planning. Dopamine agonists, primarily cabergoline and bromocriptine, act by stimulating D2 receptors, inhibiting prolactin secretion, and reducing tumor volume. Surgical intervention via transsphenoidal approach is indicated in drug-resistant cases, intolerance to therapy, or in the presence of mass effect compromising neurological or visual function. Radiotherapy is reserved for recurrent, residual, or aggressive tumors. Monitoring therapeutic response requires serial measurement of prolactin levels, periodic MRI scans, and evaluation of symptom resolution. Evidence demonstrates that early and targeted therapy improves endocrine function, restores reproductive capability, reduces tumor size, and minimizes long-term complications. Multidisciplinary collaboration among endocrinologists, neurosurgeons, and radiologists is essential to optimize patient outcomes and guide individualized care.

Materials and Methods:

This review incorporates studies published from 2005 to 2025, obtained from PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Cochrane Library, using search terms including “hyperprolactinemia,” “prolactinoma,” “pituitary adenoma,” “dopamine agonists,” “transsphenoidal surgery,” and “treatment outcomes.” Eligible studies included randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and case series assessing efficacy, safety, and long-term results of pharmacological and surgical interventions. Data extracted included patient demographics, adenoma size (micro- vs. macroadenomas), pre- and post-treatment prolactin levels, symptom resolution, tumor volume reduction, adverse events, recurrence rates, and follow-up duration. Comparative analysis focused on dopamine agonist therapy versus surgical management, evaluating biochemical and clinical response, tumor shrinkage, and quality of life metrics.

Results:

Dopamine agonists are highly effective in achieving prolactin normalization in over 80–90% of microadenomas and 70–80% of macroadenomas. Cabergoline demonstrates superior efficacy and tolerability compared to bromocriptine, with lower rates of nausea, hypotension, and treatment discontinuation. Tumor shrinkage occurs in the majority of patients, often within 3–6 months of therapy initiation, with macroadenomas exhibiting 30–60% volume reduction on MRI. Transsphenoidal surgery achieves complete tumor resection in 70–80% of microadenomas, with lower biochemical cure rates in macroadenomas, particularly when invasion of the cavernous sinus is present. Recurrence rates following surgery range from 10–20% for microadenomas and up to 40% for macroadenomas over long-term follow-

up. Combined strategies, including preoperative dopamine agonist therapy followed by surgery for resistant cases, demonstrate improved outcomes. Long-term follow-up indicates sustained prolactin normalization, symptom relief, and improved reproductive function in the majority of patients. Adverse effects of dopamine agonists include transient gastrointestinal symptoms, headache, and, rarely, valvular heart disease at high cumulative doses. Surgical complications, though infrequent, may include cerebrospinal fluid leak, hypopituitarism, and transient diabetes insipidus. Analysis of current literature indicates that dopamine agonist therapy normalizes prolactin in over 80–90% of microadenomas and 70–80% of macroadenomas, with cabergoline demonstrating superior efficacy and tolerability compared to bromocriptine. Tumor volume reduction occurs in a majority of cases, often within 3–6 months, and is more pronounced in macroadenomas. Transsphenoidal surgery achieves complete resection in 70–80% of microadenomas, while macroadenomas have lower biochemical cure rates due to cavernous sinus invasion or tumor size. Recurrence after surgery ranges from 10–20% in microadenomas to up to 40% in macroadenomas, necessitating careful long-term follow-up. Combination therapy, such as preoperative dopamine agonists followed by surgical removal in resistant cases, enhances outcomes. Symptom resolution, restoration of gonadal function, and quality-of-life improvements are achieved in most patients with either medical or surgical therapy when applied appropriately. Adverse effects of pharmacotherapy include gastrointestinal disturbances, hypotension, and, rarely, cardiac valvular abnormalities at high cumulative doses, while surgical complications can include cerebrospinal fluid leaks, transient diabetes insipidus, or hypopituitarism, although these remain infrequent.

Discussion:

Management of hyperprolactinemia requires individualized strategies based on adenoma size, prolactin levels, clinical presentation, and patient preferences. Dopamine agonists remain first-line therapy due to high efficacy, tumor shrinkage, and non-invasiveness, with cabergoline preferred for its superior tolerability. Surgery is reserved for drug-resistant cases, intolerance, or mass effects, and advances in endoscopic transsphenoidal techniques have improved safety, visualization, and resection rates. Accurate monitoring of serum prolactin, MRI imaging, and assessment of symptom resolution are essential for evaluating treatment response and planning long-term follow-up. Combination approaches may optimize outcomes, particularly for macroadenomas or invasive tumors. Ongoing research focuses on improving drug formulations, understanding resistance mechanisms, and refining surgical and radiotherapeutic techniques to maximize tumor control while preserving pituitary function. Early intervention is critical to prevent long-term complications, restore reproductive and sexual function, and improve patient quality of life. Multidisciplinary collaboration among endocrinologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, and gynecologists ensures comprehensive care. Effective management of hyperprolactinemia requires individualized assessment based on adenoma size, prolactin levels, clinical presentation, and patient-specific factors. Dopamine agonists remain the first-line treatment due to high efficacy, tumor shrinkage, and minimal invasiveness. Cabergoline is preferred for its longer half-life, better compliance, and lower incidence of side effects. Surgical intervention is indicated when pharmacological therapy fails, is poorly tolerated, or when mass effects threaten vision or neurological function. Endoscopic transsphenoidal techniques have improved surgical precision, reduced intraoperative complications, and enhanced recovery. Long-term management requires regular monitoring of prolactin levels, MRI evaluation, and assessment of symptom recurrence. The combination of medical therapy and surgery in selected cases optimizes outcomes, particularly for invasive macroadenomas. Emerging therapies and innovations in drug delivery, genetic understanding of adenoma pathophysiology, and improved surgical instrumentation offer promising avenues for enhancing long-term efficacy and safety. Multidisciplinary care is essential for addressing endocrine, neurosurgical, reproductive, and psychosocial needs, ensuring comprehensive treatment of prolactinomas.

Conclusion:

Hyperprolactinemia syndrome due to prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas requires precise evaluation and tailored management to achieve optimal biochemical, radiological, and clinical outcomes. Dopamine agonists, particularly cabergoline, provide effective prolactin normalization and tumor reduction, while surgery serves as a crucial option for resistant or complicated cases. Integrated assessment, including hormone monitoring, MRI imaging, and symptom evaluation, ensures accurate treatment response and guides long-term follow-up. Individualized therapy maximizes efficacy, minimizes adverse effects, prevents recurrence, and improves reproductive, endocrine, and overall quality-of-life outcomes. Continued advances in pharmacology, surgical techniques, and diagnostic tools are essential to further optimize management and prognosis for patients with hyperprolactinemia.

Hyperprolactinemia syndrome due to prolactin-secreting pituitary adenomas necessitates precise diagnosis and individualized management to achieve optimal biochemical, clinical, and radiological outcomes. Dopamine agonist therapy, especially cabergoline, effectively normalizes prolactin and reduces tumor volume, while transsphenoidal surgery remains crucial for resistant or complicated cases. Accurate monitoring of hormonal levels, imaging studies, and symptom assessment is essential for evaluating treatment response and planning long-term follow-up. Individualized therapy minimizes recurrence, restores reproductive and endocrine function, and enhances overall quality of life. Future advances in pharmacology, minimally invasive surgery, and diagnostic technologies are expected to further improve patient outcomes in hyperprolactinemia management.

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