Laparoscopic Pancreatectomy: Progress & Problems

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Since the introduction of laparoscopy, application on laparoscopic surgery for pancreas is increasing these days. There are several kinds of laparoscopic surgical procedure including distal pancreatectomy, pancreaticoduodenectomy, central pancreatectomy, enucleation, etc. Although, laparoscopic pancreaticoduodenectomy is still controversial due to its difficult techniques, laparoscopic distal pancreatectomy is frequently used as an optional treatment method for the lesions in body and tail of pancreas, when the lesion is considered benign or premalignant. Laparoscopic enucleation is also a good treatment modality when the lesion is presumed to be benign and small such as insulinoma. Central pancreatectomy is moderately difficult in terms of technique, and it is occasionally used for the lesion in the neck to preserve the volume of the pancreas as much as possible. The application of laparoscopic technique to malignancy is still contraindicated and still there are few reports on this disease entity.

We retrospectively analyzed the clinical outcome of 110 patients who underwent laparoscopic pancreas surgery from June 2004 to September 2010. As regards to the technique of distal pancreatectomy, preservation of splenic vessels and spleen was tried unless the tumor was very close to splenic hilum or malignancy was suspected in preoperative radiologic studies. For pancreaticoduodenectomy, both laparoscopy assisted method and totally laparoscopic method have been used. Operation types were 87 cases of distal pancreatectomy, 10 cases of pancreaticoduodenectomy, 6 cases of central pancreatectomy, 4 cases of enucleation and 3 other operations. Among 87 patients operated on distal pancreatectomy, there were 10 patients who were diagnosed as pancreatic malignancy. Eight patients are still alive without recurrence of tumor at mean follow-up period of 30 months. One patient with recurrence is alive for 60 months postoperatively and one remaining patient has expired due to liver metastasis. Our experiences show that laparoscopic pancreas surgery is becoming an attractive option for pancreas disease.

References