



## Outcomes of open reduction and internal fixation by k-wires for Bennett's fracture, A prospective study

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Submitted: 05-09-2021

Revised: 12-09-2021

Accepted: 15-09-2021

### ABSTRACT:

**Objective:** The purpose of this prospective study is to assess the outcomes of open reduction and internal fixation with k-wire for Bennett fracture.

**Methods:** fifty patients were considered for study as per inclusion criteria. Open reduction and internal fixation with k wire was performed through dorso-radial approach and rehabilitation was done according to southeast Georgia health system. Radiological union, postoperative range of motion, pinch and grip strength and complication were assessed by associate professor at 14 days, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years

**Results:** Mean adduction / abduction at 1st MCP joint at 14 days is 75 +/- 4.5, at 1 month 82.5 +/- 3.2, at 3 months 85.3 +/- 2.7, at 6 months 87.5 +/- 2.6, at 12 months 90 +/- 2.5, at 2 years 95 +/- 0.9°, at 3

years 97 +/- 0.7 and Mean flexion/ extension At 1st MCP joint 14 days is 42 +/- 5.3, at 1 month is 46 +/- 4.7, at 3 months 48 +/- 3.2, at 6 months 53 +/- 2.9, at 12 months 57 +/- 1.7, at 2 years 60 +/- 1.2, at 3 years 62 +/- 1.1.

Mean pinch power (kg) is 10.5 +/-

0.2 and Mean grip power (kg) is 52 +/- 1.3 at 3 years

**Conclusion:** In Bennett fracture anatomical reduction and proper stabilization of fracture is of utmost importance in case of preventing post-operative pain and post-operative arthritis and for early mobilization and better outcome. These goals are very well achieved by means of ORIF with k-wires with very low cost and moderate resources.

**Keywords:** Bennett fracture, open reduction and internal fixation, k-wire

Table

	14 days (SD)	1 month (SD)	3 months (SD)	6 months (SD)	12 months (SD)	24 months (SD)	36 months (SD)
DASH	14 +/- 3	12 +/- 2	11 +/- 1	10 +/- 1	5 +/- 1	3 +/- 1	2 +/- 1
Tingling sensation and numbness	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Arthritis Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Stage 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stage 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean adduction / abduction At 1st MCP joint	75 +/- 4.5	82.5 +/- 3.2	85.3 +/- 2.7	87.5 +/- 2.6	90 +/- 2.5	95 +/- 0.9°	97 +/- 0.7



Mean flexion/extension At 1 <sup>st</sup> MCP joint	42+/-5.3	46+/-4.7	48+/-3.2	53+/-2.9	57+/-1.7°	60+/-1.2°	62+/-1.1
Mean pinch power(kg)	5.2+/-0.7	6.3+/-0.5	7.2+/-0.6	8.7+/-0.5	10.2+/-0.4	10.3+/-0.3	10.5+/-0.2
Mean grip power(kg)	32.3+/-3.7	38.6+/-2.9	41.5+/-2.6	43.5+/-1.8	46.3+/-1.5	49.9+/-1.4	52+/-1.3

Table 1: showing outcome of ORIF treated patients.

Figure



Figure

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Figure



Figure



### I. INTRODUCTION:-

1<sup>st</sup>CMC joint is a saddle type of synovial joint which is positioned in a peculiar manner of 40° abduction, 50° flexion and 80° pronation in a normal functional position that helps in improved opposition, power grip and fine grip. Hence any impairment of this joint leads to significant restrictions of the day-to-day activities. Nonetheless, this joint is also the second most common joint prone to osteoarthritis. **1]** In 1972 Green and O'Brien classified fracture of base of 1<sup>st</sup> metacarpal. This classification defines 5 types of fracture namely Rolando's fracture, Bennett's fracture, epiphyseal, transverse extra-articular and oblique extra-articular. **2]** Edward Hallaran Bennett, who was a professor of surgery (1837–1907) described it "as a fracture passing obliquely through the base of the 1<sup>st</sup> metacarpal, where the greater part of the articular surface is detached; the piece of bone was projected toward the palm of the hand which was on surface. The large fragment was separated, and the resultant deformity seems to be a dorsal subluxation of the 1<sup>st</sup> metacarpal". **3]** In adults, one third



of the fracture of base of 1<sup>st</sup> metacarpal are Bennett's fracture. 4) The peculiar pattern of this fracture is due to the muscle action of adductor pollicis and abductor pollicis longus which displace the greater fragment, i.e. the shaft of the 1<sup>st</sup> metacarpal. There is volar displacement of the smaller fracture fragment as it is attached to the palmar oblique ligament. 3] Treatment of these fractures have been reported since 1950 which showed better results when these were treated surgically. 5,6 Various surgical techniques have been suggested in the following years and there has been introduction of new techniques. Various modalities include: Closed reduction and immobilization in cast, closed reduction with percutaneous pinning and open reduction with internal fixation. As there is intra-articular extension of the fracture line and the action of muscles on the fracture fragments, the closed reduction methods may lead to displacement and worsening of the step-off of the fracture. By means of ORIF, fractures were reduced under direct vision ensuring anatomical reduction of the fragments and these patients showed to have good outcome. 7,8,9] During CRPF, step-offs and gaps were less evident by fluoroscopy. 10] To overcome this, surgery assisted by arthroscopy or by open means were advised for this fracture. 11] There has been controversial evidence regarding accuracy of fracture reduction leading to post-traumatic arthritis. The dilemma for selecting the best surgical management for this unstable fracture is due to short term follow-up of small group of patients. 12,13] To overcome this, the study group should be large and have a longer follow-up to evaluate outcome of ORIF with wires and their long term complications. 14] Hence this study was done to assess long term clinical, functional and radiological outcomes.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a prospective study conducted at our tertiary care center, after taking a formal approval from the institutional ethical committee. Our study group included patients from 2013 (May) till 2019 (June) for the period of 73 months. The inclusion criteria were skeletally mature patient, age > 15 years & < 60 years, GEDD type I fracture without other hand injuries, no other concomitant injuries and patient giving consent for surgery. The exclusion criteria were skeletally immature patient, age < 15 years or > 60 years, open fractures, patient unfit for surgery and patient not giving consent for surgery. 50 patients met the inclusion criteria. Patients with Bennett fracture (GEDD type I, fracture with single ulnar fragment and subluxation of metacarpal base) were treated with K wire by means of ORIF; minimum age at time of surgery was 15 years and

maximum age was 58 years. Open reduction and internal fixation through a radio-dorsal approach with the help of 2 K-wires was done (fig 1 and 2). K wire size was 1.6 or 2.0 mm. Surgery was performed under guidance of a single surgeon who is associated professor at our institute. Post-operative evaluations were performed under guidance of same consultant. Outpatient assessment done at post-op day 7. Usually suture removed on post-op day 12<sup>th</sup>. K wires removed after 3 weeks and follow-up done at first month, third month, sixth month, one year and every year after that. Pre-op and post-op hand strength was measured using a muscle strength scale consisting of 0 to 5 score and compared with normal hand. For post-operative evaluation DASH score was used. Post-operative complications (loss of reduction, infection, pain, tingling or numbness) were seen. Examination of senses of the operated thumb were evaluated in comparison with normal hand and grouped as intact normal sensation, tingling or numbness. Strength of grip and pinch of both hands were measured by dynamometers. Strength of pinch and grip were measured in kgs. Percentage calculation was used to see the comparison of the strength of pinch and grip between the operated and normal hand. Rehabilitation done as per Southeast Georgia health system. Which includes Post-op 10-14 Days: • Edema control is initiated as necessary. Most commonly, this includes either 3" elastic bandage or elastic stockinette. • A wrist and thumb static splint with the IP joint free is fitted to wear between exercise sessions & at night to protect the healing fracture. The splint is fitted with the thumb midway between radial and palmar abduction. Post-op Week 6: • Active & gentle PROM exercises are initiated to the thumb in flexion/extension, abduction and adduction & circumduction. ROM exercises are initiated to the wrist. • The thumb spica splint is continued between exercise sessions and at night. • NMEs may be added to the therapy program to facilitate IP flexion, as needed. Post-op Week 7: • Dynamic flexion splinting may be added if dorsal capsular tightness is present at the MP or IP joint of the thumb. Typically, the splint is worn 3-4 times a day for 45 min sessions. Post-op Week 8: • The wrist & thumb static splint is discontinued during the



eday, except for heavy lifting. •Gentle strengthening may be initiated to the hand and wrist. Post-op Week 10: • The patient may begin using the hand in normal daily activities. If cast immobilization is the method of treatment for the initial 6 weeks, the therapy program begins at 6 weeks as outlined above. The course of therapy is similar for both conservative & post-op management. Radiographic images were taken in two separate views (AP and Oblique). post-traumatic arthritis was evaluated using those radiographs using modifications by the Van Niekerk and Owens of the Eaton and Littler classification. According to this classification no clear changes of arthritis considered as stage 1, presence of osteophytes smaller than 2mm considered as stage 2, narrowed joint or greater than 2mm osteophytes considered as stage 3 and if joint space gets disappeared, it considered as stage. **15,2** ] Statistical analysis done using mean with standard deviation was used for normally distributed continuous data

### III. RESULTS

Follow up of 50 patients done and their clinical, radiological and clinical examination done at each follow up. 3 years was the mean of follow up. 34 years age was the average age for injury. out of those 50 patients 80% patients (40) were male and 20% patients (10) were female. patients injured their dominant side. injury occurred by various means like injuries during sports activities (56%), motor-vehicle injuries (26%), assault (10%) and others (8%). ORIF was performed within 5 days duration of injury. management in post-operative period was done by thumb spica slab for 7 days and removable splint after that period. Patients were examined and outcome of ORIF at postop 7 days, 14 days, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years and 60 months is shown in table 1. which shows Mean adduction/abduction At 1<sup>st</sup> MCP joint at 14 days is 75 +/- 4.5 , at 1 month 82.5 +/- 3.2, at 3 months 85.3 +/- 2.7, at 6 months 87.5 +/- 2.6, at 12 months 90 +/- 2.5, at 2 years 95 +/- 0.9° , at 3 years 97 +/- 0.7 and Mean flexion/ extension At 1<sup>st</sup> MCP joint 1 days is 42 +/- 5.3 , at 1 month is 46 +/- 4.7, at 3 months 48 +/- 3.2 , at 6 months 53 +/- 2.9 , at 12 months 57 +/- 1.7, at 2 years 60 +/- 1.2, at 3 years 62 +/- 1.1.

Complications:- Seen in 8 patients. infection occurred in three patients which were operated by ORIF mean. This infection managed by antibiotics per oral route, removal of k-wire done after 3 weeks and usually fractures healed by 14 weeks (fig 3). Examination of 48 patients revealed normal results. 2 patients had sensory issues like tingling and numbness. Radiographs show Eaton-Littler Grade III or IV of arthritis in 4 patients. step-off for gap greater than 2mm after surgery and post-traumatic arthritis shows significant correlation.

### IV. DISCUSSION

Our study group is of low socioeconomic class mainly laborers. In the priority is regaining of power and grip strength early. this fracture is very unstable due to the abductor pollicis longus muscle and adductor pollicis muscle pull on fragments it is quite challenging to both reduce it properly and stabilize it. **3**] this study shows step-off for gap greater than 2mm after surgery and post-traumatic arthritis shows significant correlation. **16,8**] various studies shown better outcomes when lesser 2mm step off and gap seen postoperatively. **17,18**] Anatomical reduction by ORIF with k-wires, aim to prevent post-traumatic arthritis. **17**] By doing surgeries in ORIF with k-wires, injury caused by multiple attempts in CRPF can be prevented. Early mobilization postoperatively in ORIF with k-wires treated patients shows important advantage of this technique. **19**] Early mobilization possible in ORIF because we are sure about anatomical reduction and proper fixation. Postop scar and adhesion can be prevented by meticulous dissection during ORIF with k-wires. CASTING can be considered for undisplaced fracture. This study shows significantly better clinical, radiological and functional results for patients which were treated by ORIF with k-wires mean during follow-up of 5 years. **7,20,8,19,21**] Due to pain there was decreased strength of pinch and grip and increased DASH score. these findings were very much clinically significant. meticulous dissection during surgery explains the very less chances of damage to important



structures while performing surgery by means of ORIF. [2,23] Thereported early postoppain was correlated with inadequate reduction and late sequelis post-traumatic arthritis (Eaton–Littler stage) which lead to pain during movement. Grip and pinch strength measured using dynamometer of operated hand and compared with uninjured opposite hand which shows very good results in seen in patients treated by ORIF with wire mean. Advantage of this study is that patients were followed up for longer period to see the complications and outcomes. Cullen et al. [24] conducted a study in which he suggested that there are no chances of posttraumatic arthritis at 1<sup>st</sup> CMC joint after fracture has healed with a step of 2-mm. Our results seem to differ from that of Cullen et al. [24], due to the fact that Cullen did his study on cadavers, while in a clinical situation, the results would be different. As per study of Gedda and Moberg, 1953 the arthritis seen in patients treated with ORIF were degenerative (degenerative changes in the joint occurred due to the age of the patients) rather than post traumatic which usually appears within 5 years of operation as seen in our study. Limitations of our study that we have not performed computerized axial tomography scan to evaluate the joint reduction and arthritis as computerized axial tomography scan is the gold standard in evaluating joint surface details and we used only dorso-radial approach. Selection bias is there due to personal choice of surgeon.

## V. CONCLUSION

In Bennett fracture anatomical reduction and proper stabilization of fracture is of utmost importance in case of preventing post-oppain and post-op arthritis and for early mobilization and better outcome. These goals are very well achieved by means of ORIF with wires with very low cost and moderate resources.

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Fig 1 Fracture reduction and placement of 2 k wire.

Fig 2 Dorso-radial approach

Fig 3 Post op x-ray at 3 weeks