

Lateral Mass Fixation: A Comprehensive Guide to Subaxial Cervical Spine Surgery



Lateral Mass Fixation in Sub-axial Cervical Spine

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★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Lateral Mass Fixation (LMF) is a surgical technique used to stabilize the subaxial cervical spine, the portion of the spine between the skull and the upper thoracic spine. LMF is commonly used to treat a variety of conditions, including:

- Cervical spondylosis
- Cervical stenosis
- Cervical radiculopathy
- Cervical myelopathy
- Cervical trauma
- Cervical deformity

LMF involves the placement of screws into the lateral masses of the cervical vertebrae. The screws are then connected to a rod, which provides

stability to the spine. LMF can be performed in conjunction with other surgical procedures, such as decompression surgery or spinal fusion.

Indications for Lateral Mass Fixation

LMF is indicated for a variety of conditions that affect the subaxial cervical spine. These conditions include:

- **Cervical spondylosis:** A degenerative condition that causes the bones and ligaments of the cervical spine to become thickened and stiff. This can lead to pain, stiffness, and difficulty moving the neck.
- **Cervical stenosis:** A narrowing of the spinal canal that can compress the spinal cord or nerve roots. This can cause pain, weakness, numbness, and tingling in the arms and hands.
- **Cervical radiculopathy:** A condition that occurs when a nerve root in the cervical spine is compressed. This can cause pain, weakness, numbness, and tingling in the arms and hands.
- **Cervical myelopathy:** A condition that occurs when the spinal cord in the cervical spine is compressed. This can cause weakness, numbness, and difficulty walking.
- **Cervical trauma:** Injuries to the cervical spine can cause instability and damage to the spinal cord or nerve roots. LMF can be used to stabilize the spine and prevent further injury.
- **Cervical deformity:** Deformities of the cervical spine can cause pain, stiffness, and difficulty moving the neck. LMF can be used to correct the deformity and improve spinal alignment.

Procedure

LMF is performed under general anesthesia. The patient is positioned on their back with their head in a neutral position. A small incision is made in the back of the neck. The muscles and ligaments are then carefully dissected to expose the lateral masses of the cervical vertebrae.

Once the lateral masses are exposed, screws are inserted into the bone. The screws are then connected to a rod, which is placed along the back of the cervical spine. The rod is secured to the screws with nuts and bolts.

In some cases, LMF is performed in conjunction with other surgical procedures, such as decompression surgery or spinal fusion.

Decompression surgery involves removing the bone or tissue that is compressing the spinal cord or nerve roots. Spinal fusion involves fusing two or more vertebrae together to create a solid segment of bone.

Complications

LMF is a relatively safe surgical procedure, but there are some potential complications. These complications include:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Nerve damage
- Screw loosening
- Rod breakage
- Failure to improve symptoms

The risk of complications from LMF is relatively low, but it is important to be aware of the potential risks before undergoing surgery.

Outcomes

The outcomes of LMF are generally good. Most patients experience significant improvement in their symptoms after surgery. LMF can provide long-term stability to the cervical spine and prevent further injury to the spinal cord or nerve roots.

However, it is important to note that LMF is not a cure for all conditions that affect the subaxial cervical spine. Some patients may still experience some pain and stiffness after surgery. In some cases, additional surgery may be necessary to address the underlying condition.

LMF is a safe and effective surgical procedure for stabilizing the subaxial cervical spine. LMF can be used to treat a variety of conditions, including cervical spondylosis, cervical stenosis, cervical radiculopathy, cervical myelopathy, cervical trauma, and cervical deformity. The outcomes of LMF are generally good, but it is important to be aware of the potential risks before undergoing surgery.



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