

Peer Review File

Article information: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/fomm-22-72>

Reviewer A :

The authors present a narrative review of two palatoplasty techniques, the Furlow Double Opposing Z-plasty Technique and the Sommerlad Radical Intravelar Veloplasty. The text analyzes the techniques, their indications, implications for the patient, pros and cons and even the possibility of using them in combination with each other and with other techniques.

I believe that the article can be published in the way it was presented.

Reviewer B

I like to provide the following comments regarding this publication.

Comment 1: Abstract should be structured according to the journal recommendations. This is a literature review however there is not a scientific evidence analysis to evaluate these methods. Revision should be based on the best level of evidence.

Reply 1: Thank you for your comment, this paper is a mini-review and the abstract has been re-structured according to the journal recommendation and now includes the level of evidence 4 as this is an expert summary based on non-systematic reviews of studies. Palatoplasty papers to date are case series although I must say that in Sommerlad's case with N's in the hundreds, 15 year follow up and speech results assessed by blinded SLP's from another institution, it is pretty strong evidence.

Comment 2: There is a lack of scientific support for the Sommerlad technique. Most of the papers are case series and there are not answers supporting this radical method. There is an anatomical disruption of the velar muscles without studies about hearing and middle ear impact. This concern should be clarified in this paper.

Reply 2: Thank you for this comment, it is unfortunate that Sommerlad chose the term "radical" in his paper. "Extensive" would have been a better choice. The operation is actually very delicate and in many cases can be done without disrupting the tensor veli palatini aponeurosis. As discussed in reply 1, all palatoplasty papers are case series based though they are based on a single surgeon technique and number in the hundreds so based on Level 3 clinical evidence. A multi-center prospective trial is currently underway comparing Furlow to Sommerlad. Preliminary results may become available late this year or next (we are a participating center). Data accrual is ongoing and we have not closed an arm due to bad outcomes or vast superiority of one technique over the other. I am not aware of any studies demonstrating a benefit to hearing that can be

attributed to the palatoplasty technique. In the US most kids get tubes early in life, but then outgrow the need. In Europe many centers are abandoning routine BMT because it causes scarring and therefore some hearing loss as well. We have additionally added figures to more clearly illustrate this technique.

Comment 3: Methodology (non systematic review) should be specified.

Reply 3: As per reply 1, and as per the article submission type this is a mini-review for a book chapter by an expert.

Comment 4: Conclusions are not based on the used methodology. Please describe them as a result of non-systematic review.

Reply 4: We will add a strengths and limitations in the main body to promote a more intellectual interpretation of the current limitations of the literature on the subject.