

A pragmatic multicentre randomised controlled trial comparing stapled haemorrhoidopexy with traditional excisional surgery for haemorrhoidal disease: the eTHoS study

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Plain English summary

The eTHoS RCT

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Plain English summary

Haemorrhoids (or 'piles') are swellings of blood vessels inside the anus. Common symptoms include bleeding, pain, itch and swelling. Haemorrhoids are graded in severity based on symptoms and size, from grade I (small piles with mild symptoms) to grade IV (large piles and major symptoms).

Traditional surgery for haemorrhoids, called traditional haemorrhoidectomy (TH), involves removal of haemorrhoids and is generally used for larger piles. Newer surgical techniques have been created as a result of an increased understanding of haemorrhoids; the treatment stapled haemorrhoidopexy (SH) was conceived over 15 years ago. Its potential advantages include less pain and a quicker return to normal activities. In this study, we wanted to compare SH with TH.

Patients could take part in the study if they had grades II–IV piles and had not had surgery before.

In this study we randomly allocated patients to receive either SH or TH. During the course of the study we asked participants about their quality of life, symptoms, recurrence of their piles and if they received further treatment. We compared the results of the different operational procedures. Within the first 6 weeks after surgery, participants who had received SH had a better quality of life because they had less pain, but over 24 months, the TH group had better quality of life, fewer symptoms and fewer further procedures.

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