

What works better? Medical vs surgical therapy

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Presentation

Education & Training

Neurogastroenterology & Motility

Oesophagus

Primary Care

Stomach & H. Pylori

Surgery

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This debate compared medical versus surgical management of GERD, with speakers agreeing that proper patient selection through comprehensive esophageal testing is crucial, and that surgery may benefit refractory cases while PPIs remain first-line for most patients.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker stated that randomized controlled trials show surgery provides better reflux control than PPIs on pH monitoring, but quality of life scores are similar at five years.
- The speaker reported that in real-world practice up to 80 percent of patients resume PPI treatment after surgery, though rates are lower in expert centers with rigorous selection.
- Post-fundoplication syndrome including gas bloat, inability to belch, and flatulence is a common side effect that patients should be informed about preoperatively.
- The speaker stated that the effect of surgery on preventing neoplasm progression in Barrett's esophagus is not established and should not be a reason for referral.
- For refractory GERD, the speaker cited a New England Journal of Medicine 2019 study showing 67 percent improvement with surgery at one year, but noted that nearly 400 patients were screened to randomize only 78, emphasizing the importance of selection.
- The speakers recommended comprehensive preoperative testing including upper endoscopy, high resolution manometry, and pH impedance monitoring, preferably off PPIs, to confirm true GERD and exclude functional disorders that may overlap in up to 75 percent of cases.

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