Classification and surgical treatment of incisional hernia. Results of an experts' meeting.


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BACKGROUND: The treatment of incisional hernia (IH) is a current problem in modern surgery. Many important aspects of incisional hernia surgery are yet to be answered, especially the choice of surgical technique and its adaptation to the individual patient. The aim of this experts' meeting was to resolve some current questions in incisional hernia surgery and to organise an international hernia register. METHODS: An international panel of ten experts met under the auspices of the European Hernia Society (GREPA) to investigate the classification and therapeutic alternatives for incisional hernia. Prior to the conference, all experts were asked to submit their arguments in the form of published results. All papers received were weighted according to their scientific quality and relevance. The information from this correspondence was used as a basis for panel discussion. The personal experiences of the participants and other aspects of individualised therapy were also considered. RESULTS: The expert panel suggested a new classification of incisional hernia based on localisation, size, recurrences and symptoms. All experts agreed that the fascia duplication and the fascia adaptation should only be used for small incisional hernias. Fascia duplication is of value only in the horizontal direction. The technical details and the pros and cons of each procedure were discussed for prosthetic implantation using onlay and sublay techniques and the technique of autodermal hernioplasty. CONCLUSIONS: The management of incisional hernia is currently not standardised. In order to answer relevant questions of incisional hernia surgery, an international hernia register should be established.