



Clinical outcomes of corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis for adult spinal deformity at 1, 2, and 5 years post-operatively

メタデータ	言語: English
	出版者: Wolters Kluwer Health
	公開日: 2023-12-11
	キーワード (Ja):
	キーワード (En):
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URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10271/0002000056

1	Clinical outcomes of corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis for adult spinal
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24	Conflicts of Interest and Source of Funding:
25	Arima, Hasegawa, Yoshida, Banno, Mihara, Ide, Watanabe, Nakai, Kurosu, and Matsuyama have nothing to

26 disclose.

Clinical Outcomes After ASD Surgery

- 1 Yamato and Oe received donated laboratory funding from Medtronic Sofamor Danek Inc. (Memphis, TN,
- 2 USA), Japan Medical Dynamic Marketing Inc. (Tokyo, Japan), and Meitoku Medical Institute Jyuzen
- 3 Memorial Hospital (Hamamatsu, Japan).
- 4 No fund was received in support of this work
- $\mathbf{5}$

6 Ethics Approval

- 7 IRB approval: This study was reviewed and approved by the Hamamatsu University School of Medicine
- 8 Institutional Review Board. (IRB No.20-264)

9

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- 18 Matsuyama
- 19 Reviewed submitted version of manuscript: all authors
- 20 Approved the final version of the manuscript: all authors
- 21 Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work: all authors

22

23 Acknowledgments

- 24 The authors would like to thank Ms. Nao Kuwahara, Ms. Tomoe Mabuchi, Mr. Taku Nagao and Mr. Tomokazu
- 25 Suzuki, Secretaries of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, for their excellence in technical assistance during
- 26 data collection. We would like to thank Editage for English language editing.

1 Abstract

2 *Study Design*: Retrospective cohort study.

Objective: To investigate whether patient-reported outcomes (PROs) were consistent at 2 and 5 years after
 corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis in patients with adult spinal deformity (ASD) and
 to analyze whether revision surgery affected long-term outcomes.

6 *Summary of Background Data*: PROs up to 2 years after corrective surgeries for ASD have been well-studied,
7 but there are few reports of mid- to long-term results.

Methods: We retrospectively analyzed patients with ASD who underwent corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis between 2010 and 2015. We investigated radiographic parameters and PROs (Scoliosis Research Society 22r [SRS-22r], Oswestry Disability Index [ODI]) pre-operatively and at 1, 2, and 5 years post-operatively, and the correlations between PROs at these time points. We also compared changes in PROs at 5 years in patients who underwent revision surgery and those who did not. *Results:* A total of 131 patients who underwent corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis

14 were analyzed. The PROs at 1 and 5 years after surgery showed significant correlations in all SRS-22r domains

15 [function (r=0.620), pain (r=0.577), self-image (r=0.563), mental health (r=0.589), subtotal (r=0.663), and ODI

16 (r=0.654)]. The PROs at 2 and 5 years after surgery showed significantly strong correlations in all domains

17 [function (r=0.715), pain (r=0.678), self-image (r=0.653), mental health (r=0.675), subtotal (r=0.741), and ODI

- 18 (r=0.746)]. There were no significant differences in the change in PROs at 5 years in any domain in patients who
- 19 underwent revision surgery (all P>0.05).

20 Conclusions: One-year post-operative PROs improved significantly. Two-year PROs correlated strongly with 5-

- 21 year post-operative PROs, indicating that 2-year PROs can predict longer term outcomes. The need for revision
- surgery did not influence the mid- to long-term clinical outcomes of corrective fusion surgery for ASD.

1 INTRODUCTION

 $\mathbf{2}$ Adult spinal deformities (ASD) are associated with poor spinal and pelvic alignment, resulting in a variety of 3 problems such as back pain, lower extremity pain, gait disturbance, visceral disturbance, and psychological disturbance.^{5,16,18} Patients with mild to moderate ASD can be treated with conservative therapies such as 4 $\mathbf{5}$ medication and exercise therapy, but surgical treatment is an option for patients whose daily activities and health-6 related quality of life deteriorate despite adequate conservative treatment.^{12,22} Pre- and post-operative evaluation 7in patients with ASD generally involves assessment of radiological parameters in the sagittal and coronal planes 8 on full-length freestanding spine radiographs. In addition, the Patient-Related Outcome (PRO) is used to evaluate 9 the patient's subjective clinical outcomes. The Scoliosis Society Research (SRS)-22r questionnaire, developed 10 in the United States, has been used widely for ASD patients because of its reliability, validity, and response to 11 treatment.⁹⁻¹¹ The Oswestry Disability Index (ODI) questionnaire, which is widely used in spinal diseases, is 12also frequently used in the field of ASD.^{15,31} Radiological and PRO evaluations for degenerative spine disease 13are generally performed at 2 years post-operatively. However, corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine 14to the pelvis for ASD can cause various problems, such as rod fractures associated with pseudoarthrosis, after 15that 2-year post-surgery timepoint. Therefore, 2-year post-operative evaluation may be inadequate. The purpose 16of this study was to investigate whether patient clinical outcomes are maintained from 2 to 5 years post-17operatively in corrective fusion surgery for ASD from the thoracic spine to the pelvis. We also aimed to determine 18 whether unanticipated revision surgeries affect long-term outcomes.

19

20 MATERIALS AND METHODS

21 Patient population

This study was reviewed and approved by our Institutional Review Board and adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. We obtained written informed consent from all participants to publish our findings. In this study, patients were diagnosed with ASD if they were 18 years or older with confirmed presence of at least one of the following: coronal scoliosis with a Cobb angle $\geq 20^{\circ}$, a sagittal vertical axis ≥ 5 cm, pelvic tilt $\geq 25^{\circ}$, or thoracic kyphosis $\geq 60^{\circ}$. The cohort included patients with ASD who underwent corrective fixation surgeries

from the thoracic spine to the pelvis between 2010 and 2015 at a single institution and were available for follow-1 $\mathbf{2}$ up for at least 5 years. Patients with spinal deformities associated with infection, malignancy, and neuromuscular 3 disease were excluded. Patients with incomplete clinical outcome data were excluded. Data on the following 4 characteristics were extracted: age, sex, body mass index (BMI) (kg/m²), Charlson Comorbidity Index (CCI),¹⁴ $\mathbf{5}$ and American Society of Anesthesiologists classification (Table 1). The pathology of scoliosis was investigated. 6 Regarding surgical data, the number of fused vertebrae, the upper instrumented vertebrae (UIV) level, presence 7or absence of an iliac screw, whether surgery was performed in two stages, total operation time, total intra-8 operative blood loss, peri-operative complications (surgical, neurological, medical), and revision surgery within 9 5 years after surgery were investigated (Table 2). Surgical complications included surgical site infection and 10 hematoma, neurological complications including two or more levels of weakness on a manual muscle strength 11 test that were either transient or permanent, and medical complications including deep venous thrombosis, 12cardiac disease, cerebral disease, pneumonia, gastrointestinal disease, urinary tract infection, and delirium. In 13this study, we defined surgical site infections as those that required surgical debridement for deep infection.

14 Radiographic measurements

15Full-length freestanding posteroanterior and lateral spine radiographs obtained at baseline and at 2 and 5 years 16after surgery were analyzed. Board-certified spine surgeons used standard techniques to measure spinopelvic 17parameters, including thoracic kyphosis (Cobb angle between the superior endplate of T-5 and the inferior 18 endplate of T-12), lumbar lordosis (LL; Cobb angle between the superior endplate of L-1 and superior endplate 19 of S-1), pelvic tilt (angle subtended by a vertical reference line originating from the center of the femoral head 20and the midpoint of the sacral endplate), pelvic incidence (PI; angle between the line perpendicular to the 21sacral plate at its midpoint and the line connecting this point to the femoral head axis), and sagittal vertical axis 22(the distance of the C-7 plumb line from the posterior-superior aspect of the sacrum).^{1,26} The inter-observer 23correlation coefficients for thoracic kyphosis, LL, pelvic tilt, PI, sacral slope, and sagittal vertical axis were 240.751, 0.736, 0.882, 0.744, 0.730, and 0.837, respectively.⁴

25 **PRO measurements**

26 PRO measurement data obtained at baseline and at 1, 2, and 5 years post-operatively were analyzed. The SRS-

- 1 22r is a scoliosis-specific health-related quality of life (HRQOL) questionnaire with 22 items and six domains:
 2 Function, Pain, Self-image, Mental health, Satisfaction, and Subtotal.^{7,19} Each domain score ranges from 1 to 5
 3 points, with higher scores indicating better outcomes.⁶⁻⁸ The scale has been reported as reliable and valid in
 4 populations with ASD.⁹⁻¹¹ The ODI is also the recommended PRO measurement for patients with spine and
 5 spinal cord disorders.¹⁵ The ODI has 10 subdomains that measure pain intensity, personal care, lifting,
 6 walking, sitting, standing, sleeping, sex life, social life, and travelling. The score for each domain ranges from
 7 0 (best health) to 5 (worst health). The ODI is another widely used method of assessing ASD (Tables 4 and
- 8 5).³¹

9 Statistical analyses

10 All values are expressed as mean \pm standard deviation (SD). The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to verify the 11 assumption regarding the normal distribution of the data. A paired sample t-test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test 12were used for within-group comparisons of continuous variables. Differences between groups were evaluated 13using the unpaired two-sample t-test or Mann-Whitney test. The chi-square or Fisher exact test was used to test 14for significant differences in categorical study parameters between both groups. Differences between three 15groups were assessed using a one-way ANOVA. Post hoc comparisons were made using the Tukey test or Games-16Howell multiple comparisons test. The Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship 17between SRS-22r domain scores at 2 years and 5 years post-operatively. The Spearman correlation coefficient 18 was interpreted as follows: <0.20 = very weak, 0.20-0.39 = weak, 0.40-0.59 = moderate, 0.60-0.79 = strong, 19and 0.80-1.0 = very strong. A *P*-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Statistical analyses were 20performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (version 26.0; SPSS, Chicago, IL, 21USA).

22

23 **RESULTS**

24 Participant characteristics

25 Of 304 patients who underwent corrective fusion surgery for ASD during the study period, 174 met the

26 inclusion criteria, and 131 (75.3% of eligible patients) of these patients could be followed up using HRQOL

- 1 questionnaires for 5 years post-operatively (Figure 1). The average age was 67.1±9.5 years (112 females). The
- 2 average BMI was 23.2±4.0 kg/m². The mean CCI was 0.5±0.8. The pathologies of patients undergoing
- 3 corrective fusion surgery for ASD are shown in Table 1.

4 Surgical details and outcomes

5 The UIV was T4 in six patients, T5 in three patients, T6 in three patients, T7 in four patients, T8 in 14 patients,

6 T9 in 25 patients, T10 in 69 patients, T11 in five patients, and T12 in two patients (Table 2). Pelvic fixation

7 was performed using S1 screws for 11 (8%) patients and iliac screws for 120 (92%) patients. The mean

8 number of fused vertebrae was 9.9±1.7. The types of procedure performed included 37 (28%) pedicle

9 subtraction osteotomies, 16 (12%) vertebral column resections, and 26 (20%) lateral lumbar interbody fusions.

10 Unanticipated revision surgeries were performed 60 times in 48 patients (37%) with ASD. Thirty-four patients

11 had one unanticipated revision surgery, 10 had two, and two had three.

12 Radiographic parameters

13 Radiographic measurements were collected from all patients pre-operatively, from 125 patients at 2 years post-

14 operatively, and from 106 patients at 5 years post-operatively. The mean 2-year post-operative LL, pelvic tilt,

15 PI minus LL, sagittal vertical axis, and coronal Cobb angle improved significantly from 11.6° to 42.6°, 35.5° to

16 25.6°, 41.4° to 10.8°, 114.1 mm to 58.0 mm, and 28.2° to 9.0°, respectively (all *P*<0.001) (Table 3). The mean

17 LL, pelvic tilt, PI minus LL, sagittal vertical axis, and coronal Cobb angle were maintained from 2 years post-

18 operatively to 5 years post-operatively (all *P*>0.05).

19 PRO measurement parameters

20 The mean 2-year post-operative SRS-22r Function, Pain, Self-image, Mental health, Subtotal, and ODI

21 improved significantly from 2.57 to 3.12, 2.91 to 3.74, 2.07 to 3.42, 2.50 to 3.32, 2.50 to 3.40, and 45.4 to

22 30.8, respectively (all P<0.001) (Figure 2). The mean SRS-22r Function, Pain, Self-image, Mental health,

23 Subtotal, and ODI were maintained from 1 year post-operatively to 5 years post-operatively (all P>0.05). The

- 24 1-year post-operative PROs correlated significantly with the 5-year post-operative PROs [SRS-22r function
- 25 (r=0.620), pain (r=0.577), self-image (r=0.563), mental health (r=0.589), subtotal (r=0.663), and ODI
- 26 (r=0.654)] (Table 4). The 2-year post-operative PROs correlated significantly with the 5-year post-operative

1	PROs [SRS-22r function (r=0.715), pain (r=0.678), self-image (r=0.653), mental health (r=0.675), subtotal
2	(r=0.741), and ODI (r=0.746)] (Table 4). The correlation coefficients between 1-year and 5-year post-operative
3	PROs ranged from 0.5 to 0.7, indicating a moderate to strong correlation, and the correlation coefficients
4	between 2-year and 5-year post-operative PROs were over 0.6, which was a strong correlation.
5	Comparison of PRO changes over 5 years between patients who underwent unanticipated revision
6	surgery after the index surgery and those who did not
7	Unanticipated revision surgeries (60 surgeries in 48 patients) were performed due to rod fracture (N=37),
8	proximal junctional failure (PJF) (N=8), hematomas (N=5), implant-related disorders (N=3), distal junctional
9	failure (N=3), malalignment (N=2), and infection (N=2). There were no significant differences in age, sex, or
10	comorbidities between patients who underwent unanticipated revision surgery after index surgery (N=48) and
11	those who did not (N=83). There was no significant difference in the amount of change in PROs at 5 years
12	after surgery (Δ 5 years vs. baseline) (Table 5).

13

14 **DISCUSSION**

15In this single-center study, we investigated the changes in PROs at baseline and at 1, 2, and 5 years after 16corrective fusion surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis for ASD. The results showed that 1-year and 2-17year post-operative PROs correlated with 5-year post-operative PROs. The correlation between the 2-year and 18 5-year post-operative PROs was stronger than the correlation between the 1-year and 5-year post-operative 19PROs, indicating that clinical outcomes stabilize at 2 years post-operatively and that long-term clinical 20outcomes can be predicted. In addition, although not statistically significant, the value of the SRS-22r function 21item and ODI tended to improve from 2 to 5 years after surgery. Considering that there is no significant 22difference in the spino-pelvic alignment between 2 and 5 years post-operatively, even if there is no change in 23the alignment, functional disability due to long range immobilization in the mid- to long-term may be reduced 24as a result of adjustment or compensation by movement of other joints, such as the hip. 25Corrective fusion surgery for ASD often involves long range fusion from the thoracic spine to the pelvis, 26which leads to mechanical complications such as rod fractures in areas of inadequate bony fusion and stress

concentration at the superior end of the fixation, resulting in proximal junctional adjacent disorders.^{17,28} In the 1 $\mathbf{2}$ past, these mechanical complications have been reported to result in reduced activities of daily living and the 3 need for revision surgery. These unanticipated revision surgeries have also been reported to inhibit the 4 improvement of PROs.²⁵ In this study, 37% of patients underwent one or more unanticipated reoperations. $\mathbf{5}$ From the standpoint of healthcare economics, it is important to minimize the number of unanticipated revision 6 surgeries.² However, the results of this study showed that these unanticipated reoperations did not have a 7negative impact on patients' PRO improvement. The reason why reoperations did not affect the long-term 8 results may be that by the 5-year post-operative evaluation, back pain due to poor alignment associated with 9 rod fracture and neurological symptoms and pain associated with PJF had been addressed with revision 10 surgery, and the symptoms had already improved. In other words, this implies that appropriate reoperation 11 revision surgeries for post-operative mechanical and other complications can improve and maintain patients' 12clinical outcomes in the mid- and long-term. 13In corrective fusion surgery for ASD, an important aspect of improving clinical outcomes is the improvement 14of global sagittal alignment. In this series, we showed that the reduction in LL at baseline was improved and 15maintained for 5 years post-operatively. In addition, there was no progression of thoracic kyphosis, which 16suggests that global sagittal alignment was maintained. The degree of correction and patient selection are 17important in improving clinical outcomes.³ ASD can be caused by a variety of factors, including disc 18 degeneration, vertebral fractures, and remnants of idiopathic scoliosis. It is important to develop a surgical 19 strategy according to the algorithm so that appropriate correction can be achieved.²⁴ In addition, spinal 20deformities in elderly patients are more invasive and have more peri-operative complications. 21The importance of the sliding scale of surgery in minimizing complications has also been reported.³⁰ The 22improvement of clinical outcomes after corrective surgery for ASD is also related to improved patient 23satisfaction.²⁰ Because of the large number of implants used in corrective fusion surgery for ASD, medical 24costs are not low.^{2,13} However, as shown in the results of this study, corrective fusion can improve and maintain 25the PROs in patients with ASD over the mid- to long-term. Efforts to reduce the number of revision surgeries 26as much as possible will be necessary in the future.

For rod fractures, the efficacy of four rods with long additional rods has been reported.²⁹ In addition, the
importance of appropriate screw length setting,²⁷ the method of UIV selection,³² rod contour at the proximal
end,²¹ and avoidance of overcorrection^{21,23} have also been reported to prevent neurological complications
associated with proximal junctional kyphosis. These measures may reduce the number of revision surgeries
and provide stable long-term results.
The strengths of this study are its large number of cases with complete PROs (131 cases) and the follow-up
rate of more than 75%, which represents a very low dropout rate for a relatively long follow-up period of 5

8 years. However, there were several limitations to this study. First, due to the limited number of patients, we
9 were not able to examine each ASD pathology separately. In addition, the finding of the present study that

9 were not able to examine each ASD pathology separately. In addition, the finding of the present study that

10 PROs are maintained in the mid- to long-term even after unanticipated revision surgery might be an

11 overestimation, since an analysis of a larger dataset showed that unexpected revision surgery has a negative

12 impact on PROs after ASD surgery²⁵. Therefore, it is necessary to re-evaluate the results in a larger sample in

13 the future. Second, there were cases of incomplete standing total spine radiological evaluation at 5 years post-

14 operatively. Third, we were not able to evaluate bone density and therapeutic agents for osteoporosis. In the

15 evaluation for ASD, long-term results at 10 and 20 years are also important and need further investigation.

16 CONCLUSIONS

PROs improved at 1 year after corrective thoracic spine-pelvic fusion surgery for ASD, and these improvements were maintained at 5 years post-operatively. Although both the 1-year and 2-year post-operative PROs were correlated with the 5-year post-operative PROs, the 2-year post-operative PROs correlated more strongly with the 5-year post-operative PROs. This indicates that long-term clinical outcomes can be predicted from the 2-year post-operative PROs. Moreover, revision surgery did not negatively influence the mid- to long-term clinical outcomes of corrective fusion surgery for ASD.

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1 FIGURE LEGENDS

- 2 Figure 1. Participant eligibility flowchart
- 3 Figure 2. SRS-22r and ODI scores from baseline to 1, 2, and 5 years post-operatively after corrective fusion
- 4 surgery from the thoracic spine to the pelvis for ASD.
- 5 *** indicates *P*-value <0.001
- 6 SRS-22r, Scoliosis Research Society 22r; ODI, Oswestry Disability Index; ASD, adult spinal deformity

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Table 1. Patients background					
Number	131				
Age	67.1 ± 9.5				
Female N (%)	112 (86)				
Body Mass Index	23.2 ± 4.0				
Charlson Comorbidity Index	0.5 ± 0.8				
ASA classification N (%)					
ASA 1	22 (17)				
ASA 2	104 (79)				
ASA 3	5 (4)				
Pathology N(%)					
Degenerative kyphoscoliosis	59 (45)				
Degenerative kyphosis	34 (26)				
Kyphosis after vertebral fracture	16 (12)				
Adult scoliosis	11 (8)				
Iatrogenic kyphosis	11 (8)				
* Mean values are presented as m Anaesthesiologists.	tean \pm SD. ASA, American Society of				

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Table 2. Surgical details	
Variables	Total
No. of fused vertebrae	9.9 ± 1.7
T4	6 (5)
T5	3 (2)
Т6	3 (2)
Τ7	4 (3)
Т8	14 (11)
Т9	25 (19)
T10	69 (53)
T11	5 (4)
T12	2 (2)
Iliac screw N (%)	120 (92)
Staged surgery N (%)	37 (28)
Pedicle subtraction osteotomy	37 (28)
Vertebral column resection	16 (12)
Lateral lumbar interbody fusion	26 (20)
Total operation time (min)	424.2 ± 80.4
Total intraoperative blood loss(ml)	1731.2 ± 1093.4
Overall complication N (%)	43 (33)
Surgical complication	8 (6)
Neurological complication	15 (12)
Medical complication	30 (23)
Revision surgery N (%)	48 (37)
Mean values are presented as mean ± instrumented level.	SD. UIV, upper

Table 3. Radiographic findings and clinical outcome findings							
Parameters	Baseline	2-year Postoperative	5-year Postoperative	P value†	Baseline vs. 2-yr <i>P value</i> ‡	Baseline vs. 5-yr <i>P value</i> §	2-yr vs. 5-yr <i>P value</i> ¶
Radiographic parameters							
TK(°)	22.8 ± 19.3	42.4 ± 14.4	42.4 ± 16.1	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	1.000
LL (°)	11.6 ± 20.0	42.6 ± 12.3	40.9 ± 11.2	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.501
PT (°)	35.5 ± 10.8	25.6 ± 9.5	26.7 ± 9.5	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.616
PI minus LL (°)	41.4 ± 21.3	10.8 ± 16.1	12.7 ± 13.9	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.600
PJA angle (°)	4.5 ± 7.2	17.3 ± 10.2	17.7 ± 10.7	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.966
SVA (mm)	114.1 ± 78.1	58.0 ± 58.9	67.3 ± 56.9	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.440
Cobb (°)	28.2 ± 23.8	9.0 ± 8.6	10.4 ± 8.6	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.485
Clinical outcome parameters							
SRS-22r Function	2.57 ± 0.70	3.20 ± 0.81	3.28 ± 0.92	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.727
SRS-22r Pain	2.91 ± 0.87	3.74 ± 0.85	3.71 ± 0.90	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.936
SRS-22r Self-image	2.07 ± 0.75	3.39 ± 0.80	3.22 ± 0.87	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.237
SRS-22r Mental health	2.50 ± 0.94	3.30 ± 0.92	3.32 ± 0.93	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.983
SRS-22r Satisfaction	NA	3.53 ± 0.86	3.54 ± 0.89	NA			
SRS-22r Subtotal	2.50 ± 0.61	3.41 ± 0.69	3.38 ± 0.78	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.939
Oswestry Disability Index	45.4 ± 16.5	30.6 ± 17.8	28.0 ± 19.6	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.500

Mean values are presented as mean \pm SD. SVA, sagittal vertical Axis; PI, pelvic incidence; LL lumbar lordosis; PT, pelvic tilt ; PJA, proximal junctional angle, TK, thoracic kyphosis. Bold type indicates statistical significance. †Comparison between groups. NA, not applicable; SRS, scoliosis research society

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Parameter	1-year and 5-year postop correlation coefficient	P Value *	2-year and 5-year postop correlation coefficient	P Value †
SRS-22r Function	0.620	<0.001	0.715	<0.00B
SRS-22r Pain	0.577	<0.001	0.678	<0.001
SRS-22r Self-image	0.563	<0.001	0.653	<0.001
SRS-22r Mental health	0.589	<0.001	0.675	<0.001
SRS-22r Subtotal	0.663	<0.001	0.741	<0.001
Oswestry Disability Index	0.654	<0.001	0.746	<0.001

revision surgery after the index su Parameter	Revision (N=48)	No revision (N=83)	P Value *
Age	65.2 ± 10.0	68.1 ± 9.1	0.088 4
Female N (%)	38 (79)	74 (89)	0.118
Body Mass Index	23.7 ± 3.5	22.9 ± 4.2	0.291
Charlson Comorbidity Index	0.5 ± 0.8	0.4 ± 0.8	0.618
∆5yr SRS-22r Function	0.79 ± 0.92	0.68 ± 0.88	0.519
Δ5yr SRS-22r Pain	0.67 ± 0.90	0.86 ± 0.98	0.270
Δ5yr SRS-22r Self-image	1.20 ± 1.01	1.12 ± 1.11	0.671
∆5yr SRS-22r Mental health	0.92 ± 0.95	0.76 ± 1.09	0.374
∆5yr SRS-22r Subtotal	0.91 ± 0.73	0.86 ± 0.82	0.702
Δ5yr Oswestry disability index	-17.4 ± 17.0	-16.8 ± 19.5	0.987

Mean values are presented as mean \pm SD. Bold type indicates statistical significance. *Comparison of PRO changes over 5 years in patients who underwent unanticipated revision surgery after the index surgery and those who did not.

Figure 1

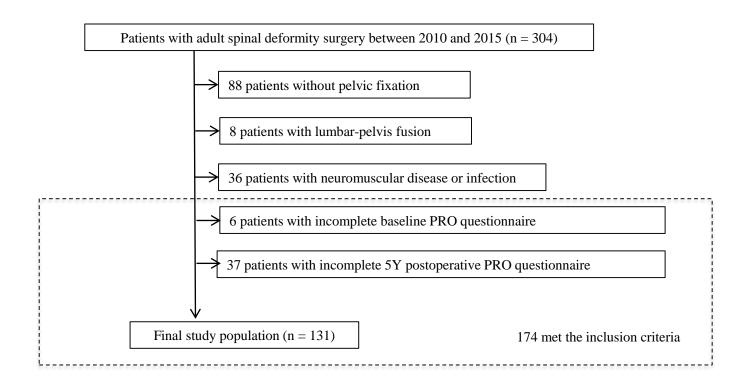


Figure 2A

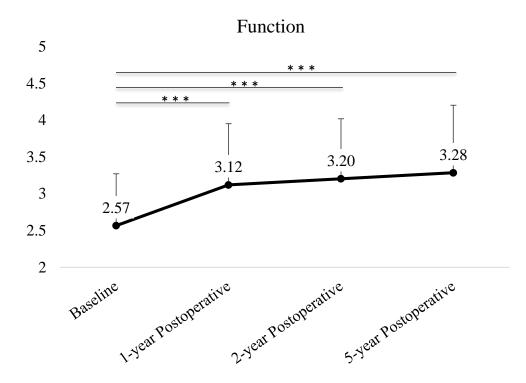
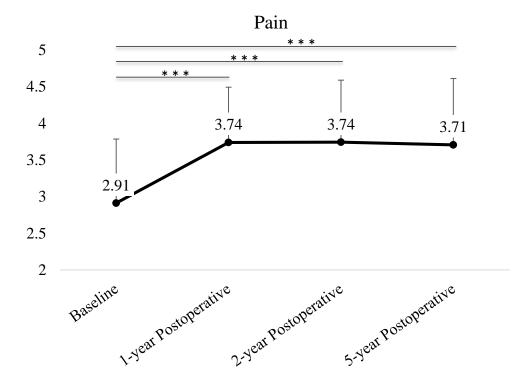


Figure 2B



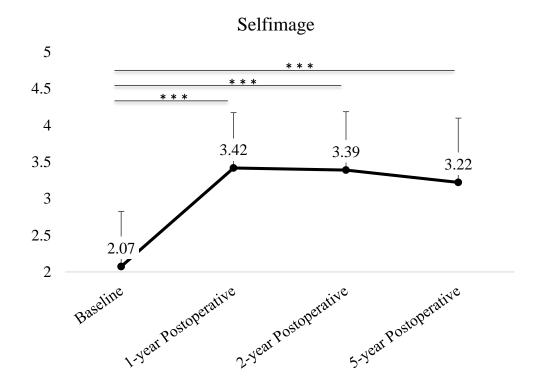


Figure 2D

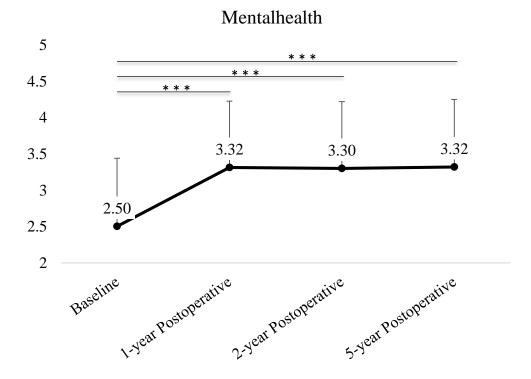


Figure 2E

