



A Computer Simulation Study for Preserving the Tibial Posterior Slope in Open Wedge High Tibial Osteotomy

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- 1 A Computer Simulation Study for Preserving the Tibial
- **Posterior Slope in Open Wedge High Tibial Osteotomy**

# 3 Abstract

## 4 **Objective:**

5 To measure the medial opening gap and examine a technique for preserving the tibial 6 posterior slope (TPS) in open wedge high tibial osteotomy (OWHTO) using computer-7 simulated three-dimensional (3D) surgery.

## 8 Materials and Methods:

This study included 24 symptomatic knees from 20 patients (7 men and 13 women; mean 9 age, 67.9 years; range 54–89 years). Digital imaging and communications from computed 10 tomography examination were applied to a 3D picture software program, and several 11 anatomical landmarks were registered. Then, computer simulation of OWHTO as a 12virtual surgery was performed: the correction angle was decided to make the femorotibial 13angle 170° and the TPS did not differ between pre- and post-planification. The distance 14between the proximal and distal cortices of the medial tibia was measured at three points, 15which were the anterior (AD), posterior (PD), and longest (LD) distance sites in the 16sagittal plane, using the 3D view, and the ratios of AD/PD and AD/LD were measured. 17The anteromedial opening gap was compared to the posteromedial gap and the longest 1819distance gap at the osteotomy site. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test was used in statistical analysis. 20

## 21 **Results:**

- 22 Mean AD/PD was 0.740±0.051 (range 0.651–0.850), and mean AD/LD was 0.652±0.040
- 23 (range 0.571–0.768). The correction angle was not associated with the values of both

AD/PD and AD/LD.

# 25 **Conclusions:**

- 26 The difference in both AD/PD and AD/LD between each patient was regarded as a
- significant variation. Therefore, preoperative planification with 3D computer simulation
  to measure AD/PD and AD/LD may be helpful to avoid a significant increase in TPS.

29

#### 30 Keywords

- 31 Computer simulation; 3-dimensional model; tibia; tibial posterior slope; open wedge high
- 32 tibial osteotomy

33

# 35 Introduction

High tibial osteotomy (HTO) is commonly performed for osteoarthritis of the knee 36 located in the medial compartment. Previously, various techniques of HTO were provided 37and evaluated. The two major operative methods, namely, closed- (CW) and open- (OW) 38 wedge HTO, are universally performed to correct lower extremity malalignment in the 39 coronal plane. First, CWHTO was reported by Coventry [1,2] and used to treat knee 40 osteoarthritis of the medial compartment. Then, OWHTO became an established surgical 41 procedure and has been frequently used recently. 42OWHTO has several advantages compared to CWHTO, such as it is needless for fibular 43osteotomy, has less risk of neurovascular injury, preserves bone stock, and allows easy 44adjustment of alignment correction [2-5]. In addition, orthopedic surgeons have suggested 4546that OWHTO allows patients to undergo rehabilitation, including the exercise of range of motion and weight-bearing, early [6]. However, OWHTO has disadvantages, such as 47delayed union at the osteotomy site [3] and change in the patellar height [7-13] and tibial 48posterior slope (TPS) [9,11,14,15]. In OWHTO, if an unintentional increase in TPS occurs, 49it may cause several problems [16,17]. Dejour et al. reported that an increased tibial slope 5051requires increased quadriceps strength to achieve full knee extension [16]. Giffin et al. reported that an increasing slope causes an anterior shift in the tibial resting position and 52

53	affects the unstable knee, which was deficient in the anterior and posterior cruciate
54	ligaments [17]. The mechanism of increase in TPS and several techniques to avoid this
55	increase after OWHTO have been reported [18-23]. Lee et al. explained the mechanism
56	of increase in TPS using a mathematical approach [19]. Briefly, the position of the lateral
57	hinge and difference between the gaps opened at the anteromedial side of the tibia and at
58	the posteromedial side affect the increase in TPS during OWHTO. Yim et al. reported that
59	three-dimensional (3D) navigation was more useful for preventing the increase in TPS
60	than two-dimensional navigation [23]. According to Song et al., TPS can be maintained
61	if the mean anterior opening gap is approximately 67% of the posterior opening gap in
62	the navigation study [22]. However, the navigation system cannot be used regularly in all
63	hospitals. In addition, differences in individual morphology should be considered.
64	In the present study, we measured the medial opening gap and examined a technique for
65	preserving TPS in OWHTO using computer-simulated 3D virtual surgery.
66	

# 67 Materials and Methods

68 The study was approved by the ethics committee of the Hamamatsu University School of69 Medicine.

From January 2016 to April 2017, 24 symptomatic knees from 20 patients (7 men and 13

71	women) with an average age of 67.9 years (range: 54-89 years) who preoperatively
72	underwent computed tomography (CT) from the hip to ankle were included in this study.
73	Fifteen patients were diagnosed as having osteoarthritis and five as having osteonecrosis.
74	Ten knees with a Kellgren-Lawrence grade (KL)-3 and five knees with a KL grade -4 had
75	knee osteoarthritis. The femoral medial condyle of three knees and tibial medial condyle
76	of two knees had osteonecrosis.

77

## 78 **3D data preparation**

Digital imaging and communications in medicine data from CT examinations were 79applied to the 3D picture software program (ZedView, LEXI, Tokyo, Japan). The center 80 of the femoral head was defined by four reference points. The functional axis of the femur 81 82 in the coronal and sagittal planes was set with respect to two reference points: the center of the femoral head and center of the knee. The femoral sagittal plane was defined as the 83 plane with the perpendicular line between the medial and lateral condyles of the femur. 84 The functional axis of the tibia in the coronal and sagittal planes was set with respect to 85 two reference points: the center of the bone marrow at one-third and two-thirds of the 86 87 tibial shaft. The tibial sagittal plane was defined as the plane with the line from the middle of the posterior cruciate ligament to the middle edge of the patellar tendon attachment to 88

the tibial tuberosity. Using the ZedHTO program (LEXI, Tokyo, Japan) under ZedView,

90 a 3D model of the lower extremity bones was created (Fig. 1).

91

The start point of osteotomy was set at 40 mm distal from the medial tibial plateau. The hinge point was set at 15 mm distal from the lateral tibial plateau and 10 mm medially from the lateral tibial cortex (Fig. 2). Then, an opening simulation was performed under two assumptions about the correction angle and change in TPS. 1) The correction angle was defined as the femorotibial angle reached 170° (Fig. 3). 2) During that simulation, TPS was preserved; in other words, the post-planification values of TPS did not differ from pre-planification values.

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# Measurement of the distance at the opening site of the medial tibial cortex

Distance between proximal and distal cortexes of the medial tibia was measured at three points, i.e., the anterior distance (AD), posterior distance (PD), and longest distance (LD) sites, in the sagittal plane using the 3D view (Fig. 4). Finally, the ratios between AD and

106 PD (AD/PD) and AD and LD (AD/LD) were measured. The anteromedial opening gap

107 was compared to the posteromedial gap using 3D software from CT images.

108

## 109 Statistical analysis

110 The intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) values of AD/PD and AD/LD were evaluated. Two raters who were experienced orthopedic 111 surgeons (H.K. and H.M.) performed computer simulation analysis using the standardized 112aforementioned method described. The intra-rater (within a rater) variability was studied, 113as one observer (H.M.) measured the gap at three points in each case twice after 1 month 114of absence. For the inter-rater (between raters) variability, AD/PD and AD/LD of all cases 115were independently measured by two observers. The examiners were blinded to each 116other's results. In addition, we evaluated the association of AD/PD and AD/LD with 117medial proximal tibial angle (MPTA), which was defined as the tibial plateau angle 118 relative to the tibial mechanical axis and the correct angle for open wedge HTO using 119120Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS statistics software, version 21 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY). 121122

## 123 **Results**

124 Table 1 shows measured data of AD, PD, and LD of each rater. The ICCs (95% CIs) for

intra-rater errors were 0.722 (0.365, 0.879) in AD/PD and 0.645 (0.190, 0.846) in AD/LD
(*p*=0.001 and 0.007, respectively). The ICCs (95% CIs) for inter-rater errors were 0.750
(0.431, 0.891) in AD/PD and 0.620 (0.159, 0.833) in AD/LD (*p*=0.001 and 0.007, respectively).

- 129 The following data were revealed as values measured by one rater (H.M.). Mean pre-
- 130 simulation MPTA was 83.1° (standard deviation [SD], 3.0), and mean post-simulation
- 131 MPTA was 93.2° (SD, 2.5). The mean wedge angle was 10.1° (SD, 2.8). The mean AD
- 132 was 6.9 mm (SD, 2.1), mean PD was 9.3 mm (SD, 2.8), and mean LD was 10.6 mm (SD,
- 133 3.0). The mean AD/PD was 0.740 (SD, 0.051), and mean AD/LD was 0.652 (SD, 0.040).
- 134 For AD/PD, the maximum was 0.850 and the minimum was 0.651. For AD/LD, the
- 135 maximum was 0.768 and the minimum was 0.571.
- 136 Figure 5a, b shows the distribution of the number of patients in each range of AD/PD and
- 137 AD/LD. The AD/PD revealed that the number of patients was distributed relatively
- 138 widely from 0.65 to 0.85, although there were slightly large numbers from 0.70 to 0.55.
- 139 Conversely, the distribution of AD/LD was from 0.60 to 0.70.
- 140 Preoperative MPTA and the correction angle were not associated with each value of
- 141 AD/PD and AD/LD (Figs. 6a, b, & 7a, b).
- 142

# 143 **Discussion**

The results of this study showed that AD/PD and AD/LD are helpful in preoperative planning of open wedge HTO and intraoperative reference points. For preoperative planning and postoperative evaluation in HTO, simple measurements are made with radiography and classic tracing paper. The benefits of this conventional method are its simplicity, low cost, and less exposure to radiation. However, the development of digital preoperative planning for orthopedic surgery has been required, and 3D simulation software has been developed to obtain excellent postoperative outcomes.

Digital preoperative planning was developed mainly in the field of hip and knee joint arthroplasty [24-26]. In several methods of digital preoperative simulation, the ZedView has been used in Japan recently. Shimizu et al. reported that the ZedView was useful for 3D visualization of the human face and applied to facial contouring surgery using free anterolateral thigh flap transfer [27]. In orthopedic surgery, 3D simulation software related to the ZedView has been used recently [28,29].

Herein, we performed a simulation of OWHTO to measure the anterior, posterior, and maximal dilatation gaps at the osteotomy site. Song reported that TPS could be maintained if the anterior opening gap was approximately 67% of the posterior opening gap [22], which was similar to our results of AD/LD as averaged data. There was a little

161 variation in our ranges of values for AD/PD and AD/LD.

Previously, Lee et al. explained that the difference between the AD of the medial 162osteotomy site and PD depends on the length from the hinge line to the medial osteotomy 163 164site [19]. On the other hand, the correction angle of open HTO and the inclination of the tibial plateau, which is reflected by the MPTA, were not related to those ratios, such as 165AD/PD and AD/LD, in our study. We considered that the AD and PD of the medial 166osteotomy site may depend on the morphology of the proximal tibia. We thought that the 167 individual difference of AD/PD and AD/LD between each patient should be considered 168 because the maximum difference was over 20% among the patients. 169

Although there was some congruity in the intra- and inter-rater errors, AD/PD had a 170relatively larger error in both intra- and inter-rater errors than AD/LD. Furthermore, the 171172distribution of AD/PD was wide, whereas that of AD/LD was not. We considered it difficult to determine the constant point as the posterior side of the medial tibia because 173the medial posterior wall of the tibia was commonly curved, not flat. In contrast, it was 174175easy to constantly determine the LD point as the definite site. Therefore, the measurement of AD/LD might be useful to preserve TPS compared with AD/PD. In fact, the point of 176177LD can be easily identified as the tip to the medial tibial cortex and tibial tuberosity, which is the reference landmark for AD that can be confirmed directly during the actual surgery. 178

We consider that the ratio of the anterior gap compared with the posterior gap or the 179maximal dilatation gap varies between each patient in terms of the preservation of TPS. 180 Therefore, we suggest that it is possible to avoid a significant increase in TPS by referring 181 182intraoperatively to AD/PD and AD/LD measured preoperatively with ZedHTO. There were several limitations to this study. First, the use of ZedHTO software involves 183expenses, and the software requires annual updates. Second, this protocol requires CT 184scanning from the hip to the ankle joint. There may be some concerns about radiation 185exposure. Third, this study was based on computer simulations, which might be different 186 from actual clinical situations. For example, in actual surgery, it is difficult to preserve 187the hinge point constantly. According to Takeuchi et al., fractures around the lateral 188cortical hinge occurred in 25% of knees [30]. However, Kendoff et al. reported that the 189 change in axial rotation was considerable in OWHTO [31]. Therefore, clinical studies 190about the change in TPS are needed in the future. 191192In conclusion, the difference in AD/PD and AD/LD between each patient was regarded to have significant variation. Therefore, preoperative planification with 3D computer 193simulation to measure AD/PD and AD/LD may be helpful to avoid a significant increase 194195in TPS.

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	279	Figure	Legends
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280 Fig. 1

- 281 Sagittal and coronal plane images and the three-dimensional image made with ZedHTO
- 282 (LEXI, Tokyo, Japan) using the left knee model.
- 283 The femorotibial angle and tibial plateau angle against the tibial mechanical axis are
- 284 measured automatically.

285

286 Fig. 2

- 287 Simulation image in the left knee model.
- 288 The start point of osteotomy (green) is set at 40 mm distally from the medial plateau (\*).
- 289 The hinge point (blue) is set at 15 mm distally from the lateral plateau (†) and 10 mm
- 290 medially from the lateral cortex  $(\dagger \dagger)$ .

291

292 Fig. 3

- 293 Simulation image after opening the osteotomy site using the left knee model.
- We defined the femorotibial angle as corrected to  $170^{\circ}$  in the current simulation.

295

Fig. 4
F1g. 4

298	The three points defined to measure the distance at the opening site.
299	In the left knee model, the distance between proximal and distal cortexes of the medial
300	tibia is measured at three points: the anterior, posterior, and longest distance sites.
301	
302	Fig. 5
303	Distribution of the number of patients by AD/PD (a) and AD/LD (b).
304	AD, anterior distance; PD, posterior distance; LD, longest distance
305	
306	Fig. 6
307	Relationship between preoperative MPTA and AD/PD (a), and AD/LD (b).
308	Preoperative MPTA is not associated with AD/PD and AD/LD (coefficient of correlations)

- 309 -0.178 and -0.327, respectively).
- 310 MPTA, medial proximal tibial angle (tibial plateau angle against the tibial mechanical
- axis); AD, anterior distance; PD, posterior distance; LD, longest distance

- 313 Fig. 7
- Relationship between the correction angle and AD/PD (a), AD/LD (b).

- The correction angle of OWHTO is not associated with AD/PD and AD/LD (coefficient
- of correlations: 0.039 and 0.156, respectively).
- AD, anterior distance; PD, posterior distance; LD, longest distance;
- 318 OWHTO, open wedge high tibial osteotomy;

Rater	AD (mm)	PD (mm)	LD (mm)	AD/PD	AD/LD
H.M.	$6.9\pm2.1$	$9.3\pm2.8$	$10.6\pm3.0$	$0.740\pm0.051$	$0.652\pm0.040$
H.K.	$7.2 \pm 1.6$	$9.7\pm2.4$	$10.8\pm2.5$	$0.753\pm0.070$	$0.676\pm0.060$

Measured data of AD, PD, and LD in each rater.

Table 1

Values are presented as mean and standard deviation.













