

Laparoscopic-assisted Anorectoplasty for Imperforate Anus

Achieves Better Functional Outcome

Imperforate anus is the absence of a normal anal opening. About 1 in 5,000 births has the problem. On average, 7 to 8 babies are born with imperforate anus in Hong Kong every year. The male to female ratio of the incidence is 1.5:1. The cause is still unknown but maybe genetically related.

Babies born with imperforate anus need early surgical treatment to restore correct anatomy and stool patterns. Imperforate anus can be classified into 2 types: low lesion and high lesion. A low type imperforate anus can be repaired by anooplasty – a procedure performed locally. For those with a high type, Laparoscopic-assisted Anorectoplasty (LAR) will be performed.

The Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, HKU, was one of the first centres to perform LAR in Asia. Introduced in 2000, LAR requires only 3 small incisions of 0.5 cm on the abdomen. The magnified surgical view enables excellent alignment of the rectum through the anal sphincters. Compared with a 10 cm incision necessary for Posterior Sagittal Anorectoplasty (PSARP), which has been the gold standard of imperforate anus repair before the development of LAR, post-operative pain is reduced for LAR, enabling faster recovery. Results so far have suggested that bowel control was better in babies with LAR.

The Department is now collecting blood samples of babies with imperforate anus and their families, as well as healthy subjects, in an attempt to identify the abnormal genes that cause the problem.