

Mental imagery doesn't improve surgeon performance

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Mental imagery training does not result in an improvement in objective surgical assessment of novice gynecological surgeons performing vaginal hysterectomies, but does correlate with improvements in resident self-confidence, according to a study published online June 7 in *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

(HealthDay) -- Mental imagery (MI) training does not result in an improvement in objective surgical assessment of novice gynecological surgeons performing vaginal hysterectomies (VHs), but does correlate with improvements in resident self-confidence, according to a study published online June 7 in *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

Roxana Geoffrion, M.D., from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, and colleagues randomly allocated junior

gynecology residents who had performed fewer than five VHs to standard MI (24 residents) or textbook reading with no MI (26 residents). Before [randomization](#), residents performed a pretest, which was evaluated by surgeons blinded to group assignment. After the intervention, residents repeated the test and were evaluated using global rating scales (GRS), procedure-specific scales, and intraoperative parameters, and by self-assessment.

The researchers found that via blinded assessment there was no difference between the groups in GRS score change from pretest to test evaluation (mean change, 13 percent for MI group and 7 percent for non-MI group; $P = 0.192$), and no difference was seen in procedure-specific score. However, there was a significant difference in the self-assessed GRS score between the groups (mean change, 19 percent for MI group and 9 percent for non-MI group; $P = 0.005$). Residents in the MI group also felt more confident performing a VH (mean change, 19 versus 11 percent; $P = 0.033$).

"This small trial did not show an improvement in objective [surgical performance](#) of novice gynecological surgeons after MI," the authors write. "The improvements in self-assessment of surgical skills and confidence suggest that MI may have an impact that could translate later into improved surgical performance."

Several authors disclosed [financial ties](#) to the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

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