

Mosquito netting reduces suffering of groin hernia at a fraction of the cost of surgical mesh

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Mosquito mesh cannot just prevent malaria, but can also be used to reduce the suffering caused by groin hernia. A surgical operation using mosquito mesh to repair the hernia can give millions of people a chance at a better life. This according to a study performed in collaboration with Umeå University, Sweden.

"Mosquito mesh was originally intended to capture mosquitos, but can now be used to prevent intestines from falling through holes in the abdomen. This advancement means that even low and [middle income countries](#) can benefit from the mesh-based surgical method that is used in high income countries," says Jenny Löfgren, doctoral student at Umeå University, who participated in a study of the subject matter.

Groin hernia repair is among the most commonly performed surgical procedures on the planet. Around 20 million hernia repairs are performed every year – but far from everyone gets a chance at sufficient medical care if any medical care at all. This is where ordinary, cheap mosquito mesh can come to the rescue. Without operation, groin hernias can cause much suffering and pain. Life-threatening complications can also set in, and already result in 40,000 deaths annually.

Close to 200 million people suffering from groin hernia, and a majority of those live in poor parts of the world, are not operated on and those who are, are often subjected to worse methods of treatment than in the richer countries. The price of a surgical mesh is USD 100 and above. Such an amount is insurmountable to the world's poor and the impoverished health care. In eastern Uganda, for instance, over six per cent of adult men suffer from groin hernia but less than one per cent of groin hernia patients undergo surgery per year.

Mosquito mesh is already used in groin hernia surgery in some places but the safety and effectiveness of this practice has hardly been evaluated, which is something Jenny Löfgren and her Ugandan and Swedish colleagues' vast study now changes. The study compared mosquito mesh to a regular, commercial mesh in groin hernia repair. Almost all 300 patients were tracked for one year and there were no deviations in terms of complications, hernia recurrence or patient satisfaction.

"Therefore, our study provides solid evidence that the mosquito mesh can be used for the treatment of groin hernia without compromising about safety or efficiency. This at a fraction of the cost of more expensive mesh. These findings have generated great international attention, and I hope it will help in spreading the news about the method in low and middle income countries," says Jenny Löfgren.

Provided by Umea University

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