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1 **TITLE PAGE**

2
3 **The Effect of Lateral Crural Repositioning on Alar Base Reduction According to Skin**
4 **Thickness in Primary Rhinoplasty Patients**
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29 **The Effect of Lateral Crural Repositioning on Alar Base Reduction According to Skin**
30 **Thickness in Primary Rhinoplasty Patients**

31
32

33 **ABSTRACT**

34

35 **Objective:** To investigate the frequency of alar base resection in patient with different skin thickness
36 undergoing lateral crural repositioning and lateral crural strut graft, and to evaluate the results in the
37 context of the current literature.

38

39

40 **Material & Method:** This retrospective study included 621 patients who underwent primary
41 open septorhinoplasty by the same surgeon (A.E.I.) between January 2012 and June 2015 at the
42 Rinocen-ter, Istanbul, Turkey.

43 From the surgical notes, operation type (Lateral Crural Reposition (LCrep) with Lateral Crural
44 Strut Grafting (LCSG), with or without alar base resection) and skin type determined
45 intraoperatively were recorded.

46 The study subjects' skin types were determined intraoperatively and divided into three groups.
47 Pa-tients whose tip definition was limited by skin thickness and subcutaneous tissue were
48 classified as having thick skin. Patients whose tip cartilage were visible and could be observed
49 despite overlying soft tissue and skin were accepted as thin-skinned. If during the procedure the
50 patient's tip cartilage had no effect on the tip definition, their skin was considered normal.

51 **Results:** Overall, the rate of alar base resection differed significantly based on whether (LCrep) +
52 (LCSG) was performed ($p=0.001$).

53 In patients with thin skin, there was a marked difference in the incidence of alar base resection
54 in relation to (LCrep) + (LCSG), but the difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.070$).

55 In patients with thick skin, we observed a significant difference in the frequency of alar base
56 resec-tion related to (LCrep) + (LCSG) ($p=0.005$).

57 In patients with normal skin, LCrep+LCSG had no significant effect on the frequency of alar base
58 resection ($p>0.05$).

59

60 **Conclusion:** The necessity of alar base reduction after repositioning with lateral crural struts is
61 greater in patients with thick skin compared to those with thin and normal skin.

62

63

64 INTRODUCTION

65

66 The most important stage of an aesthetic nose surgery is tip-plasty. It is not always possible to
67 correct nasal tip deformities and positional anomalies in the cartilage structures that form the
68 nasal tip using classic suture and graft techniques. Lateral Crural Reposition (LCrep)+ Lateral
69 Crural Strut Grafting (LCrep+LCSG) is one of the most advanced techniques in current aesthetic
70 nasal tip surgery. It is imperative for surgeons who want excellent rhinoplasty outcomes to
71 master the technique of (LCrep) + (LCSG). Patient selection for (LCrep) + (LCSG) requires
72 preoperative planning based on existing tip position problems. (LCrep) + (LCSG) is one of the
73 most effective techniques for correcting tip asymmetry and malposition, especially in cases that
74 cannot be corrected with traditional tip-plasty suturing techniques, such as very thin,
75 malpositioned, concave or asymmetric tip cartilage (1,2).

76

77 (LCrep) + (LCSG) is currently performed by many experienced surgeons as a very effective
78 technique for achieving ideal tip anatomy and correcting problems like parentheses tip
79 deformity and boxy nasal tip which cannot be corrected using other methods. In recent years
80 lateral crural repositioning and LCSG have become the most common techniques employed in
81 patients with cephalic positioning of the lateral crura. The technique of LCSG was first described
82 by Jack P. Gunter, who claimed it was an effective solution for boxy nasal tip, malposition, alar
83 rim retraction, alar rim collapse and pathologic conditions of the lateral crura such as concave
84 lateral crura (3). Lateral crural repositioning eliminates length differences between nasal
85 projection and the dorsum, defines projection by changing the dome position, and allows the
86 liberation of the lateral crura and fixation to the medial crura at the desired position (1).
87 However, every technique has advantages and disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of
88 (LCrep) + (LCSG) is the possibility of postoperative problems such as graft visibility and palpable
89 hardness, especially in patients with thin skin. Furthermore, a graft of the incorrect length under
90 the lateral crura can cause the area of the lateral crural complex insertion to protrude into the
91 nasal cavity, occluding the external valve and the airway. Other limitations of the procedure are
92 that it requires extra cartilage, it is necessary to elevate the lateral crura from the underlying
93 mucosa, and it is technically challenging. Toriumi et al. stated that by increasing alar spread, the
94 procedure resulted in alar base widening and thus increased the frequency of alar base
95 reduction (1). However, there have been no evidence-based studies conducted on this topic.
96 In this study we investigated the frequency of alar base resection in patients undergoing (LCrep)
97 + (LCSG) in different skin types and we evaluated the results in the context of current literature.

98

99 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

100

101 This retrospective study included 621 patients who underwent primary open septorhinoplasty
102 by the same surgeon (A.E.I.) between January 2012 and June 2015 at the Rinocenter, Istanbul,
103 Turkey. Surgical records of the patients were analyzed retrospectively. From the surgical notes,
104 operation type (LCrep with or without LCSG, with or without alar base resection) and skin type
105 determined intraoperatively were recorded.

106

107 Preoperatively all patients underwent a routine otorhinolaryngologic examination and were
108 evaluated by endoscopic nasal examination using a 0 degree endoscope. All patients with wide
109 alar bases; wide sills and alar flares are noted preoperatively and evaluated in operation
110 following the other steps of rhinoplasty. Patients with chronic sinusitis, nasal polyps, history of
111 asthma or allergic rhinitis, and those with previous septoplasty or rhinoplasty were excluded
112 from the study.

113

114 Cases with an angle of 30 degrees or less between the caudal edge of the lateral crura and the
115 midline of dorsum as measured by gonioscope were considered cephalic malposition (Figure
116 1,2,3,4) (4). These patients underwent LCrep+LCSG (5). Afterwards, tip sutures as well as
117 columellar supporting grafts appropriate for the patient (tongue-in-groove or columellar strut)
118 and cap grafts were applied to increase tip definition.

119

120 We also tried to identify how rhinoplasty maneuvers affects alar base width and flaring using
121 sequential photographs taken intraoperatively after each stage of rhinoplasty. The
122 surgeon's interpretation of the intraoperative photographs was that skeletonization of the lateral
123 cruras, LCrep+LCSG increased alar width, tip suturing without lateral crural steal does not affect
124 the width of the alar base whereas performing cap grafting and lateral crural steal reduced alar
125 width (See e-images 1-8).

126

127 The study subjects' skin types were determined intraoperatively and divided into three groups.
128 Patients whose tip definition was limited by extra skin and subcutaneous tissue were classified
129 as having thick skin. Patients whose tip cartilage were visible and could be observed despite
130 overlying soft tissue and skin were accepted as thin-skinned. If during the procedure the
131 patient's tip cartilage had no effect on the tip definition, their skin was considered normal (6).
132 The nasal alae were evaluated at the conclusion of the procedure after suturing of the inverted V
133 incision. Alar base resection was performed in patients with alar base width exceeding the

134 intercanthal distance and patients with increased alar spread or nasal flare. When deciding
135 whether to perform alar base resection, the width of the nasal tip in proportion to the base was
136 considered in patients with wide nasal tips. Base reduction was not performed in patients whose
137 nasal tip would look relatively wider, especially patients with thick skin. In cases that were still
138 undecided regarding alar base resection, if the alae were within an acceptable distance of the
139 medial canthus line, the procedure was not conducted and the natural structure of the nostrils
140 was preserved (1).

141

142 **Surgical Technique**

143

144 Although a closed approach using endonasal techniques may be preferable for rhinoplasty,
145 studies have demonstrated that open approach rhinoplasty is more suitable for patients
146 undergoing repositioning (1). A standard 1% lidocaine 1:100,000 epinephrine mixture was
147 injected into the septum and outer nose as local anesthesia. The standard inverted V incision
148 was made with a No. 11 blade, then bilateral marginal incisions were made with a No. 15 blade.
149 Following skeletalization, the caudal septum was exposed gently. Hump resection was
150 performed, after which the primary nasal dorsum height was determined. The septodorsal and
151 bony-cartilaginous junction, or the keystone area, was shaped by using a power rasp. The
152 mucoperichondria were elevated bilaterally and the graft was obtained. The septal L-strut was
153 left to support the dorsum and caudal. Before lateral crural strut grafting, a septal cartilage graft
154 was obtained from each patient. Bony vault width and nasal bone spacing were evaluated in all
155 patients and medial or paramedian osteotomy was performed in selected patients, followed by
156 high-to-low internal osteotomy for all patients. Asymmetric spreader grafts were placed to
157 reconstruct the middle vault, followed by tip-plasty. Patients requiring repositioning were
158 identified by measuring the angle between the lateral crura and the midline with a goniometer.
159 LCrep+LCSG was performed in patients with an angle of less than 30 degrees between the lateral
160 crura and the midline, while the surgery proceeded directly to tip-plasty in patients with an
161 angle of 30 degrees or more.

162 For patients undergoing LCrep+LCSG, the vestibular mucosa below the lower lateral cartilage
163 was infiltrated with local anesthetic and hydrodissected, then dissected from the caudal edge to
164 the cephalic edge with iris scissors. The mucosal connection at the cephalic edge of the lateral
165 cartilage was separated while leaving the cutaneous connection in the anterior caudal region
166 intact. The lateral cartilages were freed by separating them from the accessory cartilages. Pieces
167 of cartilage 3-4 mm wide and 15-25 mm long were removed from the septum and shaped for
168 grafting. The graft was placed under the lateral cartilage with its tip extending 5 mm beyond the

169 cephalic tip of the lateral crura and secured with a pair of 5/0 vicryl sutures. Bilateral pockets
170 were created anterior and caudal to the accessory cartilage dissecting the tissues in the
171 direction of the lateral canthus, and the lateral crura supported by the lateral crural strut grafts
172 were placed in these pockets in contact with the anterior nasal aperture. After the lateral crura
173 and grafts were positioned in the pockets, the lateral crural strut grafts were fixed to the
174 vestibular skin with 5/0 vicryl sutures (Figure 1, 2, 3, 4).

175

176 Following middle vault modification in patients who did not undergo LCrep+LCSG, columellar
177 supporting grafts were applied using the appropriate graft type to achieve tip definition and the
178 inverted V incision was sutured with 6/0 Prolene. After suturing, patients were assessed for alar
179 base resection. In cases where the interalar distance exceeded the intercanthal distance or alar
180 flare was increased, marking was done for alar base resection using the midline as a reference.
181 Starting from a midline at the columella, the excess nostril and alar amount was determined
182 independently on both sides and triangular flaps were marked bilaterally on the medial alae,
183 after which the alar crease was marked extending at furthest to 9 o'clock on the right and 3
184 o'clock on the left. The excess skin was then marked and excised with a full-thickness incision
185 right on the natural crease using a No. 15 blade. After achieving hemostasis, the nasal alae were
186 reinserted with 6/0 Prolene sutures at close intervals. The columella was stabilized using
187 bilateral fluted silicone tampons placed in the nasal passages. The operation was concluded by
188 dressing the nose and applying a thermoplastic nasal splint.

189

190 **Statistical Analysis**

191 NCSS (Number Cruncher Statistical System) 2007 (NCSS, LLC, Kaysville, Utah, USA)
192 software was used for all statistical analyses. Descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard
193 deviation, frequency and percent) were used for quantitative and qualitative data accordingly.
194 Three separate binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to analyze the effects of
195 gender, skin type and application type on alar base resection. Multivariable logistic regression
196 analysis was conducted where gender, skin type, application type and all two-way and three-way
197 interactions were introduced as independent variables and alar base resection as dependent
198 variable. Mantel-Haenszel tests were used to test the conditional independence of association
199 between application type and alar base resection at different levels of skin thickness. P values
200 ≤ 0.05 were accepted as statistically significant.

201

202

203 **RESULTS**

204

205 A total of 621 patients, 15.3% (n=95) male and 84.7% (n=526) female, who underwent
206 surgery at the Rinocenter Clinic between January 2012 and 2015 were included in the study.
207 LCrep+LCSG was performed in 51.4% (n=319) of the surgeries and alar base reduction was
208 performed in 53% (n=329) (Table 1).

209

210

211 In the univariate analysis gender, application of LCrep+LSCG and skin thickness variables
212 introduced separately as independent variables where alar base resection was introduced as the
213 dependent variable. Being female increases the risk of positive alar base resection 2.061 fold [OR
214 (95%CI): 2.061 (1.316, 3.228), p:0.002]. Application of LCrep+LSCG, increases alar base resection
215 positivity with an odds ratio of 1.821 [OR (95%CI): 1.821 (1.324, 2.504), p<0.001]. Skin thickness
216 was not found to have an effect on alar base resection (p>0.05).

217 We performed binary logistic regression analysis using the enter method to analyze the effects
218 of gender, skin type and application of LCrep+LSCG on alar base resection. Gender, skin type,
219 LCrep+LCSG and all two-way and three-way interactions were introduced as independent variables
220 where alar base resection was introduced as the dependent variable. None of the main effects and two-
221 way interactions were found statistically significant (p>0.05). We found statistically significant effect
222 at female, LCrep+LCSG applied and thick skinned subjects (p:0.022). Mantel-Haenszel statistics were
223 calculated for female and male subjects separately. Effect of LCrep+LCSG application on alar base
224 resection was analyzed at three different layers of skin thickness. Breslow-Day analysis was used to
225 test preliminary assumption of the homogeneity of the odds ratios and rejected for both male and
226 female gender. Conditional independence was rejected for female gender (χ^2 :10.821, p:0.001).
227 Rejection of conditional independence shows that, association between LCrep+LCSG application and
228 alar base resection was significantly different in different skin thickness types. For female gender,
229 %57.3 (n=51) of normal skinned LCrep+LCSG applied subjects had alar base resection positivity,
230 where this percentage was found to be 58.2 and 68.6 for thin, thick skinned subjects respectively.
231 Odds ratios, of alar base resection positivity when LCrep+LCSG was applied compared to not applied
232 were calculated. Odds ratios were found to be 1.289, 1.990 and 2.383 for normal, thin and thick
233 skinned subjects (p:0.386, p:0.108, p:0.001, respectively). These results showed that thick skinned,
234 LCrep+LCSG applied, subjects had a greater odds ratio of alar base positivity compared to normal and
235 thin skinned subjects.

236

237

238

239 **DISCUSSION**

240

241 Repositioning the lower lateral cartilages and supporting them with lateral crural struts is one of
242 the most advanced shaping methods in the tip-plasty stage of aesthetic rhinoplasty. Changing the
243 angle of the lateral crura and supporting them from below with cartilage strut grafts allows the
244 correction of a host of deformities including boxy nasal tip, lateral crural malposition, alar
245 retraction, nasal valve insufficiency, and concave lateral crura (3). The lateral crura are the
246 principle anatomic structure forming the aesthetic and functional character of the nasal tip.
247 Considering the importance of tip-plasty in nasal aesthetics, it is clear how important the LCSG
248 technique is. With the right techniques, it is possible to create equilateral triangular nasal tip as
249 well as functionally support the alar rims to prevent nasal obstruction. In lateral crural
250 malposition, the angle between the midline and the lateral crural insertion point is 30 degrees or
251 less. Studies indicate that malposition is one of the most common nasal tip deformities observed
252 in primary and secondary rhinoplasty patients (7). Mathematical analysis of the effect of
253 cephalic malposition on tip-plasty revealed differences in projection, rotation and lateral crural
254 length. Malposition has been found to impact tip-plasty and has led to the development and
255 utilization of different tip-plasty techniques (8). Directing the lateral crural angle toward the
256 medial canthus weakens the alae, resulting in 'parentheses tip deformity (9). New techniques
257 have been attempted to correct this issue in noses with parentheses tip deformity and cephalic
258 malposition (10).

259

260 Toriumi reported that alar rim grafting was not necessary in patients undergoing LCSG and
261 repositioning because those procedures provided sufficient support to the alar rims (11, 12).

262

263 Various techniques have been described to support and strengthen the lateral crura, such as alar
264 batten grafting, but malposition cannot be solved by alar batten grafts alone and requires the
265 combination of multiple techniques. Alar batten grafting may correct nasal valve insufficiency
266 (13). However, this technique alone is not adequate for other aesthetic deformities like
267 parentheses deformity and boxy nose.

268 The repositioning and strut technique, although very effective, also has disadvantages in addition to its
269 advantages. These disadvantages include dislocation of the lateral crural complex from the created
270 pocket and visibility of the lateral crural structures through the skin in the long-term. In addition,
271 because the lateral crural strut grafts do not extend to the anterior nasal aperture, they may protrude
272 into the nasal cavity and occlude the airway. These problems usually occur when the surgeon is still

273 mastering the technique or are related to mistakes in patient selection. Further research into the patient
274 selection criteria for the repositioning procedure is warranted. Separate analysis of patients with
275 normal, thick and thin skin who underwent repositioning and strut grafting revealed no
276 differences in aesthetic satisfaction or functional improvement according to skin type (4). Toriumi
277 claimed that this technique has led to an increase in the frequency of alar base resection (1). Although
278 repositioning is quite effective at reducing projection and providing support to the alar rims, it leads to
279 alar flare, wider nasal base. In the current study, the frequency of alar base resection was
280 approximately two-fold higher in patients who underwent LCSG with the repositioning procedure.
281 Our results of this current study supported Toriumi as patients of all skin types together. We selected
282 skin types intraoperatively according to the observation of the surgeon (6). This is a limitation of our
283 study that we did not have an objective tool like ultrasonographic measuring or biopsy pattern but the
284 same experienced surgeon evaluated all patients as a standardized observation of skin thickness
285 intraoperatively.

286

287 Procedures to narrow the alar base date back over a century. Alar base resection was first
288 performed in 1892 by Robert Weir, who described the technique as an external wedge resection
289 for the correction of unequal nostrils (14). In 1931, Joseph performed alar base resection by an
290 internal excision, thus turning the alar base resection technique into an internal approach (15).
291 Many investigators have refined the technique over the years in an attempt to minimize the
292 scarring that can form due to the classic Weir incision (16-19).

293

294 In our analysis of patients undergoing lateral crural repositioning and strut grafting in terms of
295 skin type (normal, thin or thick), we found that alar base resection was performed significantly
296 more often in patients with thick skin. Looking at patients of all skin types together, we found the
297 frequency of alar base resection was higher in patients who underwent repositioning and LCSG.
298 Our results support the previous study by Toriumi et al. No significant difference was detected in
299 patients with normal skin, while in patients with thin skin there was a marked but statistically
300 nonsignificant trend toward a higher rate of alar base resection performed in conjunction with
301 these techniques. Surgeons planning to utilize these techniques should consider the patient's
302 skin type preoperatively.

303

304 **CONCLUSION**

305

306 Cephalic malposition is a common problem observed in primary and secondary rhinoplasties
307 which impacts patient satisfaction both functionally and aesthetically. Among the various

308 techniques reported in the literature, the most effective is LCrep+LCSG. The combination of
 309 lateral crural repositioning with struts and alar base reduction is becoming more common. The
 310 necessity of alar base reduction after repositioning with lateral crural struts is greater in
 311 patients with thick skin compared to those with thin and normal skin. Surgeons using the
 312 technique should be aware of this possibility during their preoperative analyses and plan the
 313 operation accordingly.

314

315 **Table 1. Distribution of Descriptive Characteristics**

		Total (n=621)	2013 (n=301; 48.5%)	2014 (n=220; 35.4%)	2015 (n=100; 16.1%)
Gender, <i>n (%)</i>	Male	95 (15.3)	55 (18.3)	28 (12.7)	12 (12.0)
	Female	526 (84.7)	246 (81.7)	192 (87.3)	88 (88.0)
LCrep+LCSG, <i>n (%)</i>	(-)	302 (48.6)	145 (48.2)	89 (40.5)	68 (68.0)
	(+)	319 (51.4)	156 (51.8)	131 (59.5)	32 (32.0)
Alar base resection, <i>n (%)</i>	(-)	292 (47.0)	144 (47.8)	98 (44.5)	50 (50.0)
	(+)	329 (53.0)	157 (52.2)	122 (55.5)	50 (50.0)

316

317

318

Table 5: Univariate and multivariable analysis of gender, skin thickness and application of LCrep+LCSG on alar base resection

	Univariate		Multivariable				
	<i>p</i>	OR (%95 CI)	B	<i>p</i>	OR	95% CI for OR	
						Lower	Upper
Gender (Female)	0.002**	2.061 (1.316, 3.228)	0.554	0.067	1.740	0.962	3.149
LCrep+LCSG (+)	<0.001**	1.821 (1.324, 2.504)	0.579	0.056	1.784	0.986	3.229
Skin thickness	0.269	-		0.466			
Skin thickness (Thin)	0.758	1.074 (0.684, 1.686)	0.160	0.701	1.173	0.519	2.654
Skin thickness (Thick)	0.115	1.325 (0.934, 1.879)	0.313	0.217	1.368	0.832	2.250
LCrep+LCSG (+) by Gender (Female)	-	-	0.049	0.936	1.050	0.321	3.439
Gender * Skin thickness	-	-		0.687			
Gender (Female) by Skin thickness (Thin)	-	-	-0.679	0.415	0.507	0.099	2.594
Gender (Female) by Skin thickness (Thick)	-	-	-0.267	0.599	0.766	0.283	2.071
LCrep+LCSG * Skin thickness	-	-		0.501			
LCrep+LCSG (+) * Skin thickness (Thin)	-	-	0.110	0.895	1.117	0.218	5.714
LCrep+LCSG (+) * Skin thickness (Thick)	-	-	-0.545	0.283	0.580	0.214	1.568
LCrep+LCSG * Gender * Skin thickness	-	-		0.070			
LCrep+LCSG (+) * Gender (Female) * Skin thickness (Thin)	-	-	0.647	0.698	1.910	0.073	50.001

LCrep+LCSG (+) * Gender (Female) * Skin thickness (Thick)	-	-	2.319	0.022*	10.163	1.389	74.349
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CI: Confidence Interval, OR: Odds Ratio,

Male gender, LCrep+LCSG (-) and normal skin thickness were accepted as reference categories for respective variables.

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