

# **Long-term success of fibrin glue in the treatment of perianal fistulas-a multicenter study.**

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## **Abstract:**

Background: Instillation of fibrin glue, a simple and safe procedure, has been shown to have a moderate short-term success rate in the treatment of cryptogenic perianal fistulas. The Aim: of this study is to assess the long-term outcome of this procedure. Methods: A telephone interview of patients who underwent fibrin glue instillation for complex cryptogenic fistula between 2002 and 2003 in a prospective trial and had successful healing of the fistula in a 6-month follow-up was made to establish long-term follow-up. Results: Sixty patients participated in the initial trial, 32 of whom were considered successfully treated at 6 months. We managed to locate and interview 23 (72%) of those patients. Seventeen (74%) patients remained disease free at a mean follow-up of 6.5 years, 6 (26%) patients had variable degree of recurrence. 4 (17.3%) needed further surgical intervention (3 fistulotomies, 1-incision and abscess drainage) and 2 (8.6%) were treated with antibiotics only. Recurrent disease occurred at an average of 4.1 years from surgery (range 11 months to 6 years), and on several occasions was at a different location in the perianal region. None of the patients suffered from incontinence following the procedure. Conclusions: Short-term success of fibrin glue in the treatment cryptogenic perianal fistula is predictive of long-term healing, but 25% of those healed in the short term may develop recurrent symptoms in the long run. Re-opening of the fistula tract or de novo cryptogenic disease may account for late recurrence. Injection of fibrin glue remains a safe, simple procedure and may preclude extensive surgery.