

# Surgery for shoulder instability in Greenland.

Follow-up 2 to 10 years after open Bankart repair in 40 patients.

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**Background:** Shoulder dislocations occur frequently in the Greenlandic Inuits, however no previous reports address the result of surgery for recurrent shoulder dislocations in Greenland. The high frequency of joint hyperlaxity, and delay in treatment, might lead to inferior result of surgery. We report the results 2 to 10 years after open Bankart repair done for severe anterior shoulder instability.

**Methods:** Inuit patients who had primary open Bankart repairs performed 2002-2010 were included in study. Out of 49 patients 40 were available for the follow-up. The patients were contacted by phone or letter and a questionnaire concerning re-dislocation, instability feeling (subluxation), pain, shoulder stiffness and patient satisfaction, were completed. The design of the questionnaire was simple and translated to Greenlandic to overcome cultural and language barriers.

**Results:** Most of the patients had a history of multiple dislocations and had spent years on the waiting list for surgery. Mitek metallic suture anchors were used in all the procedures and capsular reefing or duplication, was performed in most cases. No postoperative complications were observed. The mean follow-up time was 5 years (2-10 years). 16 patients (40 %) have had feelings of subluxations, the majority infrequently. 7 patients (17 %) experienced re-dislocation. 4 of these patients had only one re-dislocation and 3 of these had no further dislocations or other complaints from the shoulder. One of the patients with one re-dislocation had multiple subluxations. 5 (13 %) patients had severe, recurrent instability with multiple dislocations or subluxations. All 5 patients had a preoperative history of dislocations for more than 5 years. 3 patients complained of daily pain and 2 reported bothersome stiffness of the shoulder. However 82 % of the patients were satisfied with the treatment, 13 % not completely satisfied and 5 % were dissatisfied.

**Interpretation:** The open Bankart procedure is a safe operation, resulting in a stable, painless shoulder in the majority of the patients, however minor residual instability is common. In general the patient satisfaction is high. In patients with a very long preoperative history of dislocations, recurrent severe instability is frequent. In these patients an alternative operative procedure, including coracoid transfer, might be indicated.