



Return to Play After the Latarjet Procedure for Anterior Shoulder Instability

A Systematic Review

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Background: Traumatic anterior shoulder instability is a common clinical problem among athletic populations. The Latarjet procedure is a widely used treatment option to address shoulder instability in high-demand athletes at high risk of recurrence. However, rates and timing of full return to sports have not been systematically analyzed.

Purpose: To systematically review the evidence in the literature to ascertain the rate and timing of return to play and the availability of specific criteria for safe return to play after the Latarjet procedure.

Study Design: Systematic review.

Methods: A systematic literature search was conducted based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, using the EMBASE, MEDLINE, and Cochrane Library databases. Eligible for inclusion were clinical studies reporting on return to play after the Latarjet procedure. Statistical analysis was performed by use of SPSS.

Results: Our review found 36 studies including 2134 cases meeting our inclusion criteria. The majority of patients were male (86.9%), with a mean age of 25.4 years (range, 15–59 years) and a mean follow-up of 83.5 months. The overall rate of return to play was 88.8%, with 72.6% returning to the same level of play. Among collision athletes, the overall rate of return to play was 88.2%, with 69.5% returning to the same level of play. In overhead athletes, the overall rate of return to play was 90.3%, with 80.6% returning to the same level of play. The mean time to return to play was 5.8 months (range, 3.2–8 months). Specific return to play criteria were reported in the majority of the studies (69.4%); time to return to sport was the most commonly reported item (66.7%).

Conclusion: The overall rate of return to play was reportedly high after the Latarjet procedure. However, almost a fifth of athletes returning to sports were not able to return at the same level. Further development of validated criteria for safe return to sports could potentially improve clinical outcomes and reduce recurrence rates.

Keywords: Latarjet; anterior shoulder instability; systematic review; return to play

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The authors declared that they have no conflicts of interest in the authorship and publication of this contribution. AOSSM checks author disclosures against the Open Payments Database (OPD). AOSSM has not conducted an independent investigation on the OPD and disclaims any liability or responsibility relating thereto.

Considerable debate exists regarding how to best treat anterior shoulder instability in athletes. The coracoid transfer, often referred to as the Latarjet procedure, is commonly used in these patients. The Latarjet procedure is especially indicated in the setting of significant glenoid bone loss, Hill-Sachs lesions, or collision sports, as studies have shown reduced recurrence rates compared with Bankart repairs as well as excellent long-term outcomes.^{3,29} Recently, interest has increased in performing the Latarjet procedure arthroscopically for decreased stiffness and quicker rehabilitation, but concerns remain due to the complexity of this operation when performed arthroscopically.³⁰

Warth et al⁴⁷ found that among athletes undergoing surgery for anterior shoulder instability, return to sports at previous levels was more important than anything else, including postoperative recurrence. The Latarjet

procedure has been shown to provide similar rates of return to play compared with arthroscopic or open soft tissue techniques, although few studies have directly compared the techniques.^{8,9,16,27,28,32,44,53} However, no concise review of the literature is yet available regarding the rates and timing of return to play after the Latarjet procedure. Additionally, no validated criteria for safe return to play after the Latarjet procedure are available.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to systematically review the evidence in the literature to ascertain the rate and timing of return to play and the availability of specific criteria for safe return to play after the Latarjet procedure. Our hypothesis was that the Latarjet procedure would result in high rates of return to play but that criteria for return to play would be scantily reported.

METHODS

Study Selection

The literature search was performed by 2 authors (C.M., M.S.J.), who used PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines and reviewed the search results; a senior author (L.P.) arbitrated on any disagreement.³⁹ The titles and abstracts identified in the search were screened, and potentially eligible studies received a full-text review.

Search Strategy

The following search terms were used in MEDLINE, EMBASE, and the Cochrane Library databases in May 2018 as the search algorithm: (Latarjet OR open Latarjet OR arthroscopic Latarjet OR Latarjet procedure OR Bristow OR open Bristow OR Bristow procedure OR Bristow-Latarjet). No time limit was given to publication date.

Eligibility Criteria

The inclusion criteria were the following: (1) clinical study on the open Latarjet procedure, (2) report on return to play, (3) published in a peer-reviewed journal, and (4) published in English. The exclusion criteria were the following: (1) review studies, (2) cadaveric studies, (3) biomechanical studies, and (4) abstract only.

Data Extraction and Analysis

The relevant information regarding the study characteristics, including the study design, the level of evidence (LOE), the methodological quality of evidence (MQOE), the population, clinical outcome measures, and the follow-up time points, was collected by 2 blinded reviewers (C.M., M.S.J.) using a predetermined data sheet, with the results compared by a third independent reviewer (L.P.).

The LOE was evaluated based on the guidelines by the Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine. The MQOE

was evaluated by use of a modified Coleman methodology score.²⁰ Studies were considered excellent quality if they scored 85-100, good quality if they scored 70-84, fair quality if they scored 55-69, and poor quality if they scored less than 55. The criteria for quality of return to play were based on the previously published criteria of Zaman et al.⁵² These criteria consisted of return to play timeline, conditional criteria, measurement of conditional criteria, and rehabilitation protocol (timeline of immobilization postoperatively). A score of 4 indicated well-defined return to play criteria, a score of 1-3 indicated poorly defined criteria, and a score of 0 indicated no criteria.

Clinical outcomes extracted and analyzed were (1) overall rate of return to play and return to previous levels, including overall rate, rate among collision athletes, and rate among overhead athletes; (2) time of return to play; and (3) return to play criteria.

Statistics

Quantitative statistical analysis was performed by use of SPSS (IBM Corp).

RESULTS

Literature Search

The initial literature search resulted in 771 total studies. After removal of duplicates, the articles were screened for inclusion and exclusion criteria, and 516 unique studies were evaluated and full texts were assessed for eligibility. This review included 36 clinical studies^{||} (Figure 1).

Study Characteristics and Patient Demographics

Our review found 36 studies including 2134 cases that met our inclusion criteria.^{||} The mean MQOE of the studies was 62.4. The majority of patients were male (86.9%), with a mean age of 25.4 years (range, 14-69 years) and a mean follow-up of 83.5 months. The study characteristics and patient demographics are shown in Table 1.

Return to Play

The overall rate of return to play was 88.8%, with 72.6% of athletes returning to the same level of play. Among collision athletes, the overall rate of return to play was 88.2%, with 69.5% returning to the same level of play. In overhead athletes, the overall rate of return to play was 90.3%, with 80.6% returning to the same level of play. The mean time of return to play was 5.8 months (range, 3.2-8 months) (Table 2).

^{||}References 2, 4-11, 13-16, 19, 22-27, 32-36, 38, 40-43, 45, 46, 48-51, 53.

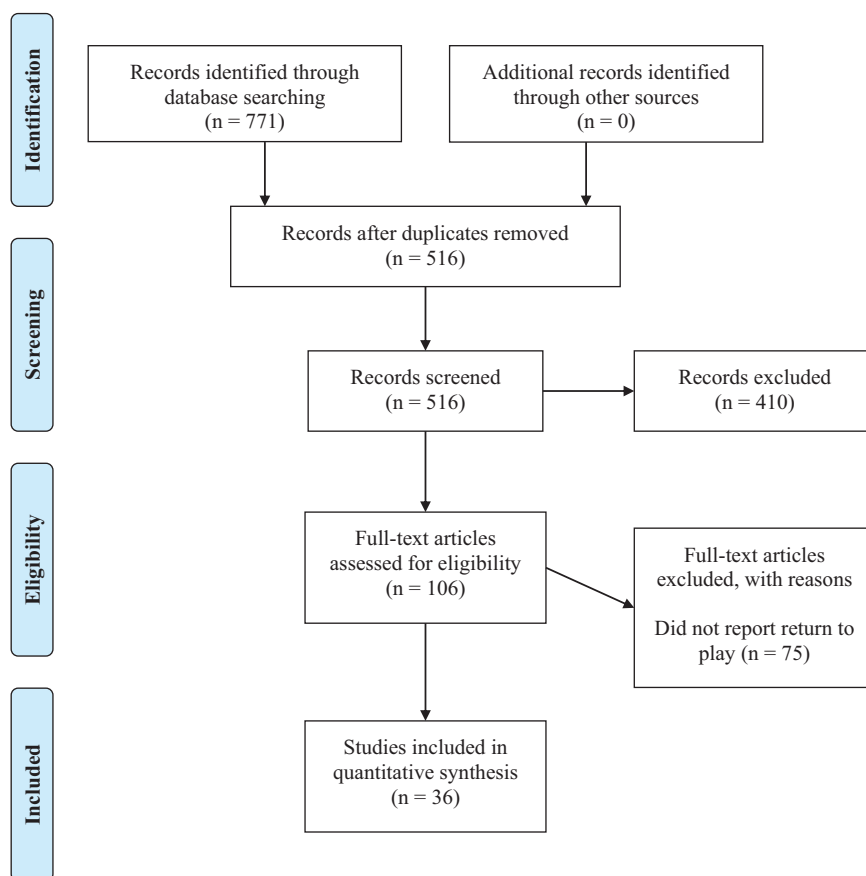


Figure 1. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) study selection flow diagram.

Return to Play Criteria

The overall return to play criteria were reported in the majority of the studies (69.4%); time to return to sport was the most commonly reported item (66.7%). A wide discrepancy was found in reported time of return, ranging from 3 to 6 months, with 3 months being the most commonly used time point (35.4%). Other criteria, including computed tomography imaging to assess bone union (25%), clinical examination or decision (11.1%), strength (11.1%), pain (8.3%), and range of motion (5.6%), were less commonly reported. The mean score for quality of return to play criteria was 2.2 (range, 0-4) (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The most important finding of the present study was that the Latarjet procedure for the treatment of anterior shoulder instability provided a high overall rate of return to play. Additionally, a high rate of return to sport was found among collision and overhead athletes. However, despite the high overall rate of return to sport, a considerable number of patients were not able to return to previous levels of play. Only scant criteria for safe return to play were

identified in the literature. The most commonly reported criteria were based on timing, but several studies reported the use of computed tomography scans to evaluate bony union and allow for safe return with a potentially lower risk of recurrence.

The overall rate of return to play was high after the Latarjet procedure. The current study found an 89% rate of return to play. This is in contrast to the findings of other systematic reviews: Ialenti et al³¹ reported a 73% rate of return to play among 353 patients in 6 studies, and Abdul-Rassoul et al¹ reported a rate of 81% among 205 patients in 5 studies. Thus, the rate of return to play may be higher than previously reported in systematic reviews in the literature. The difference in the search terms used may account for this, as the previous studies specify return to sports terms linked with shoulder stabilization terms, which may limit the search to studies with sports terms in the keywords, whereas we used a broad search strategy incorporating all studies on the Latarjet procedure. However, the rate of athletes returning to the same level of play was lower at 74%, meaning that of those athletes returning, approximately 20% were not able to achieve their preoperative level of play. The cause for this is likely multifactorial and harder to quantify. Besides the inability to return to sports at the desired level due to

TABLE 1
Study Characteristics and Patient Demographics^a

Lead Author	Year	No. of Patients (Shoulders)	LOE	MQOE	RTPQ	Male, n	Age, y, mean (range)	Follow-up, mo, mean (range)
Allain ²	1998	56 (58)	4	56	1	43	28 (15-58)	172 (120-276)
Aurich ⁴	2015	6 (6)	4	58	1	5	27 (23-41)	36 (36)
Banas ⁵	1993	71 (79)	4	71	1	63	22 (16-42)	103 (24-164)
Baverel ⁶	2018	106 (110)	3	66	4	88	22 (16-30)	46 (25-86)
Beranger ⁷	2016	47 (47)	4	67	2	46	28 (18-46)	46.8 (NR)
Bessière ⁸	2014	90 (93)	3	68	2	89	26 (16-46)	72 (48-120)
Blonna ⁹	2016	30 (30)	3	70	2	26	32 (19-45)	64 (24-108)
Bohu ¹⁰	2016	46 (46)	3	56	0	41	25 (NR)	18.5 (12+)
Bonnevialle ¹¹	2013	11 (11)	4	56	2	9	31 (19-45)	40 (24-65)
Bouju ¹³	2014	68 (70)	4	69	0	48	27 (NR)	156 (120-180)
Burkhart ¹⁴	2007	47 (47)	4	71	4	46	27 (16-41)	59 (32-108)
Cerciello ¹⁵	2012	26 (28)	4	58	4	26	21 (15-32)	85 (5-180)
Cho ¹⁶	2016	35 (35)	3	57	2	32	28 (18-50)	30 (19-48)
Colegate-Stone ¹⁹	2015	56 (56)	4	57	3	50	24 (16-42)	12 (NR)
Da Silva ²²	2015	51 (52)	4	62	1	42	31 (15-59)	22 (12-66)
Dauzère ²³	2016	68 (68)	4	67	2	67	26 (16-40)	21 (4-60)
De L'Escalopier ²⁴	2018	20 (20)	4	49	0	20	27 (NR)	196 (180-288)
Doursounian ²⁵	2009	34 (34)	4	62	1	31	32 (20-58)	24 (NR)
Edouard ²⁶	2010	20 (20)	4	59	3	20	27 (19-45)	21 (NR)
Hovellius ²⁷	2004	113 (118)	4	66	1	95	27 (15-57)	182 (172-250)
Jeon ³²	2018	31 (31)	3	63	2	26	27.4 (NR)	28.9 (24-73)
Kawasaki ³³	2018	152 (176)	4	71	4	NR	19 (18-19)	52 (47-56)
Kee ³⁴	2018	56 (58)	4	70	2	54	27 (18-43)	67 (24-113)
Khan ³⁵	2014	26 (28)	3	50	0	21	16 (NR)	116 (NR)
Lädermann ³⁶	2013	117 (117)	3	65	2	82	28 (16-55)	194 (120-266)
Mizuno ³⁸	2014	60 (68)	4	66	4	49	29 (16-58)	240 (216-264)
Mook ⁴⁰	2016	38 (38)	4	52	2	33	26 (16-43)	38 (24-95)
Neyton ⁴¹	2012	34 (37)	4	59	4	34	23 (17-33)	144 (68-237)
Privitera ⁴²	2018	73 (73)	4	70	4	64	26 (15-54)	52 (24-120)
Ranalletta ⁴³	2018	65 (65)	4	80	3	63	27 (17-35)	44 (24-108)
Tasaki ⁴⁵	2015	38 (40)	4	62	4	37	21 (17-25)	31 (24-42)
Vadala ⁴⁶	2017	24 (24)	4	49	0	22	27 (18-46)	24 (24)
Yamashita ⁴⁸	2002	126 (126)	4	61	2	100	25 (14-69)	41 (24-72)
Yang ⁴⁹	2016	52 (54)	3	58	4	41	22 (15-40)	42 (24-120)
Yoneda ⁵⁰	1999	83 (85)	4	58	4	70	21 (16-46)	70 (24-144)
Zimmermann ⁵³	2016	93 (93)	3	68	2	82	31 (NR)	119 (NR)

^aLOE, level of evidence, MQOE, methodological quality of evidence; NR, not reported; RTPQ, quality of return to play criteria.

TABLE 2
Return to Play (RTP) Outcomes

Outcome	No. of Studies	Result, % (n/N)
Total RTP	32	88.8 (1463/1650)
RTP at same or higher level	31	72.6 (1122/1527)
Total RTP for collision athletes	12	88.2 (591/670)
RTP at same or higher level for collision athletes	11	69.5 (401/577)
Total RTP for overhead athletes	2	90.3 (28/31)
RTP at same or higher level for overhead athletes	2	80.6 (25/31)

physical limitations after shoulder dislocation and stabilization surgery, changes in lifestyle (eg, decision to end participation in nonprofessional collision sports or stepping down levels of competition) and fear of injury despite physical ability potentially influence reported rates of return to

play. Future research should include analysis of the decisive factors for nonreturn to the preinjury level of sports when reporting on rates of return to play.

These results compare favorably with those of other systematic reviews evaluating other surgical treatment

TABLE 3
Return to Play Criteria

Criteria	n (%)
Overall	25 (69.4)
Time	24 (66.7)
Time, collision athletes and noncollision athletes	5 (13.9)
Imaging	9 (25.0)
Clinical examination and decision	4 (11.1)
Strength	4 (11.1)
Pain	3 (8.3)
Full range of motion	2 (5.6)

options for anterior shoulder instability. In a recent systematic review, Memon et al³⁷ found that 81% of athletes returned to play after arthroscopic Bankart repair, with 66% returning to previous levels of play. Few studies have directly compared Bankart and Latarjet procedures; those studies conducting such comparisons have not found a significant difference between these techniques, although the overall pooled rate of return to play is slightly higher with the open Latarjet procedure (83.5% vs 70.3%).^{8,9,32,53} Similarly, randomized controlled trials have found similar rates of return for open and arthroscopic Bankart repairs.^{12,18} Additionally, the timing of return was approximately 5 months, which could be slightly advantageous over soft tissue repairs, as the time taken for bone healing may be faster than that for soft tissue healing. Memon et al³⁷ found a mean time of return to play of approximately 8 months after arthroscopic Bankart repairs, which may support this theory. However, the injuries and rationale for treatment with each surgical option may differ between those treated with Bankart repairs and the Latarjet procedure, which makes comparison difficult.⁵³

A high rate of return to sport was found among collision and overhead athletes. Multiple studies have evaluated the outcomes of the Latarjet procedure in collision athletes and found high rates of return with low recurrence rates.⁴ These findings indicate that the Latarjet procedure is a reliable procedure in collision athletes.⁴ In contrast, only a few studies exist reporting on outcomes of overhead athletes, which might represent a concern in performing a nonanatomic procedure that may limit range of motion or have negative implications for throwing mechanics in this population.⁹ Nonetheless, the available studies show that the Latarjet procedure presents a reliable treatment option in overhead athletes with high rates of return to play at all levels.

Despite the generally high rate of return to sports, the review of the literature revealed that not everybody can return at the preinjury level. This is an often overlooked but very important point when counseling patients, and often their parents, especially for high-demand populations such as collision or overhead athletes, where up to 30% of patients are expected to not return to their preinjury level of sport.

The majority of included studies reported rather generic criteria for return to play, with the majority being time-based criteria, most commonly 3 months. Validated return to play criteria could potentially help reduce the rate of recurrence after return to play. The use of imaging modalities such as computed tomography to assess bony union might be an interesting indicator for return to play but might not be feasible in every clinical setting and can only work in conjunction with clinical criteria. Ciccotti et al¹⁷ previously identified criteria for return to play after the surgical management of traumatic anterior shoulder instability, although their study focused primarily on soft tissue injuries and repairs. Development of a validated checklist for safe return to play after the Latarjet procedure would be of great interest, with the potential to significantly improve patient outcomes.

Further study is needed regarding return to play outcomes after the Latarjet procedure, particularly comparing the outcomes with other methods of shoulder stabilization. No study has compared the timing of return to play between the Latarjet and Bankart procedures. Additionally, prospective literature is lacking comparing the Latarjet or Bankart procedures with the various bone block procedures available today. The Latarjet procedure is most commonly performed via an open approach; however, interest in performing the Latarjet arthroscopically is increasing.³⁰ Although studies have shown an improved pain recovery time for arthroscopic Latarjet, due to the minimally invasive approach, no data are available regarding how this translates to return to play time or how the 2 techniques compare in that regard. To our knowledge, no study has evaluated the rate or timing of return to play after the arthroscopic Latarjet procedure.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations and sources of biases, including the limitations of the included studies themselves. The majority of studies provided uncontrolled level 4 evidence, which may introduce potential selection bias. Due to reporting limitations in the included studies, we were not able to analyze demographic factors as potential risk factors for inability to return to play. Finally, the term *Latarjet procedure* is typically colloquially used in place of *coracoid transfer*, the latter of which may be more correct. Similarly, variations in the Latarjet technique and its eponymous use may affect the outcome.²¹

CONCLUSION

The overall rate of return to play was reportedly high after the Latarjet procedure. However, almost a fifth of athletes returning to sports were not able to return at the same level. Further development of validated criteria for safe return to sports could potentially improve clinical outcomes and reduce recurrence rates.

*References 2, 14, 21, 26, 27, 41-43, 45, 48, 50.

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