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Abstract

Thoralf Stange: **Updated surgical indication for spontaneous asymptomatic nasal septal defects**

Introduction: Reconstructions of nasal septum defects are very difficult. There are only a few rhinoplasty centers that regularly perform such defect closures and achieve high complete reconstruction rates. This is probably why there has been a scientifically unproven belief that spontaneous asymptomatic nasal septum defects do not require surgery. Long-term studies are lacking.

Method: Since 2011, patients with nasal septal defects have accounted for the overwhelming majority of cases seen by the author during consultations. Patients with untreated, spontaneous, asymptomatic septal defects were followed up over several years.

Results: Between 2011 and 2023, a total of 1,484 patients were seen with nasal septum defects. 238 of these patients, who did not initially undergo surgery, were followed up over the next 1 to 8 years. Among them were 60 patients with spontaneous defects. In 42 of these 60 cases (70%), there was a significant increase in the size of the defects. Three of these patients showed an almost doubling of the defect size after 5–8 years. In comparison, enlargements occurred in only 4.8% of cases (5 out of 104) with postoperative nasal septal defects.

Discussion/Conclusions: Since most patients with spontaneous nasal septal defects are likely to experience an enlargement of the defect—in some cases even doubling in size—the treatment regimen must be changed. These patients should be recommended septal reconstruction, even if they are symptom-free, as an increase in size would likely lead to symptoms and, in particular, worsen the prognosis for complete surgical reconstruction.