

EP-177

림프부종에서 보조적 지방흡입술의
수술적 치료 효과(압박 치료 이탈 및
장기적 상하지 부피 감소) 개선

Adjunctive Liposuction Improves Garment Weaning and Long-Term Volume Reduction After Surgical Treatment of Lymphedema



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Purpose : Lymphedema is a chronic progressive disease characterized by lymphatic dysfunction and subcutaneous fibrosis. Liposuction has recently been combined with physiologic procedures such as lymphaticovenous anastomosis (LVA), lymph node-venous anastomosis (LNVA), and vascularized lymph node transfer (VLNT) to improve surgical outcomes. This study evaluated the impact of adjunctive liposuction on postoperative outcomes in patients with lymphedema.

Methods : A retrospective analysis was conducted on patients who underwent surgical treatment for lymphedema between August 2024 and January 2026. Limb circumferences were measured preoperatively and at 1, 3, 6, and 12 months postoperatively to estimate limb volume. Garment weaning was categorized as no change, partial weaning, or complete weaning. Postoperative outcomes were compared between patients who underwent liposuction and those who did not.

Results : The garment-free rate was significantly higher in the liposuction group than in the non-liposuction group (31.0% vs. 8.8%). Ordinal logistic regression showed a significantly higher likelihood of garment weaning in the liposuction group (odds ratio 3.12, 95% CI 1.12–8.66; p=0.029). At postoperative 1 year, limb volume reduction was greater in the liposuction group than in the non-liposuction group (18.2% vs. 8.3%). After adjustment for baseline limb volume, the liposuction group demonstrated significantly lower limb volume at 1 year (p=0.011).

Conclusion : Adjunctive liposuction significantly improved garment weaning and was associated with greater long-term limb volume reduction compared with physiologic surgery alone.

Figure 1. Garment weaning status according to surgical treatment. Stacked bar chart demonstrating the distribution of garment weaning outcomes in the liposuction and non-liposuction groups.

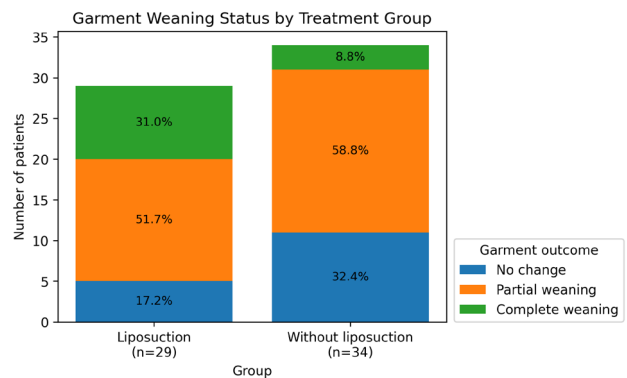


Figure 2. Percent volume reduction over time after surgery. (a) Mean percent change in limb volume relative to baseline at postoperative 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year in the liposuction and non-liposuction groups. (b) One-year volume reduction between groups. Volume change at postoperative 1 year in the liposuction and non-liposuction groups.

