



Original Article

Clinical Utility of Pediatric Cystoscopy in Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms Evaluation in a Tertiary Medical College Hospital: An Observational Study (2022–2025)

Reza S¹, Rahman S², Leema EA³, Basher AKM K⁴, Mohanta P⁵, Abir A⁶

Abstract

Background: Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in children are common and often require detailed evaluation to identify underlying anatomical or functional abnormalities. Pediatric cystoscopy remains an important diagnostic and therapeutic tool in pediatric urology.

Objective: To evaluate the clinical utility, indications, cystoscopic findings, and outcome of pediatric cystoscopy in male children presenting with lower urinary tract symptoms in a tertiary medical college hospital.

Methods: This observational study was conducted in the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Pediatric Urology of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital from January 2022 to January 2025. A total of 312 male children aged 1 month to 7 years undergoing diagnostic or therapeutic cystoscopy for LUTS were included. Demographic profile, presenting symptoms, imaging findings, cystoscopic findings, intervention performed, and postoperative outcomes were analyzed.

Results: The mean age was 3.2 ± 1.8 years. Most patients

belonged to the 1–5 years age group (61.9%). Common presenting symptoms were poor urinary stream 131 (42.0%), recurrent urinary tract infection 119 (38.1%), straining during micturition 97 (31.1%), urinary retention 56 (17.9%), hematuria 34 (10.9%), and dribbling of urine 28 (9.0%). Posterior urethral valve was the most common cystoscopic finding 112 (35.9%), followed by cystitis 56 (17.9%), urethral stricture 37 (11.9%), bladder trabeculation 31 (9.9%), ureterocele 19 (6.1%), and normal findings 44 (14.1%). Therapeutic intervention was performed in 128 patients (41.0%). Minor postoperative complications occurred in 25 patients (8.0%) and were managed conservatively.

Conclusion: Pediatric cystoscopy is a safe and effective modality for evaluation and management of lower urinary tract symptoms in children. It provides significant diagnostic accuracy and allows simultaneous therapeutic intervention in selected patients.

Keywords: Pediatric cystoscopy, lower urinary tract symptoms, posterior urethral valve, pediatric urology, DMCH.

1. Md. Shahin Reza
Associate Professor, Department of Pediatric Surgery
Dhaka Medical College and Hospital
2. Md. Samidur Rahman
Head, Dept. of Pediatric Surgery, Dhaka Medical College & Hospital
3. Elora Afroz Leema
Associate Professor, Department of Radiology & Imaging
Dhaka Medical College and Hospital
4. A K M Khairul Basher
Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatric Urology
Dhaka Medical College and Hospital
5. Pankaj Mohanta
IMO, Dept. of Pediatric Surgery, Dhaka Medical College & Hospital
6. Ashekin Abir
Registrar, Department of Pediatric Surgery
Dhaka Medical College and Hospital

Correspondence to: Md. Shahin Reza

Associate Professor, Department of Pediatric Surgery
Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: srezapaedisurgery@gmail.com, Cell: 01711010161

Introduction

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in children represent a broad spectrum of storage and voiding abnormalities affecting quality of life and renal function if left untreated. Common symptoms include poor urinary stream, frequency, urgency, urinary retention, recurrent urinary tract infection, and hematuria.^{1,2}

Pediatric cystoscopy has become an essential diagnostic and therapeutic procedure in modern pediatric urology. It enables direct visualization of the urethra, bladder neck, ureteric orifices, and bladder mucosa, facilitating accurate diagnosis of congenital and acquired lower urinary tract pathologies.^{3,4}

The procedure is particularly useful in children with suspected posterior urethral valve, urethral stricture, ureterocele, recurrent urinary tract infection, hematuria, and unexplained voiding dysfunction. Several studies have demonstrated the utility of cystoscopy in identifying clinically significant abnormalities that are occasionally

missed by ultrasonography and voiding cystourethrogram alone.^{5,6}

Despite advancements in imaging modalities, cystoscopy remains the gold standard for direct lower urinary tract evaluation. It additionally permits simultaneous therapeutic intervention such as valve fulguration, urethral dilatation, stent removal, and foreign body extraction.^{7,8}

Posterior urethral valve is one of the most common causes of infravesical obstruction in male children and may lead to progressive renal impairment if not diagnosed early.^{9,10} Early endoscopic evaluation can improve outcome by allowing timely diagnosis and intervention.¹¹

Flexible and rigid pediatric cystoscopy techniques have significantly improved visualization and reduced procedural morbidity in pediatric patients.^{12,13} The procedure is considered safe with minimal complications when performed under proper aseptic precautions and anesthesia support.¹⁴

Limited data are available from developing countries regarding the role of pediatric cystoscopy in lower urinary tract symptom evaluation. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the clinical utility, findings, and outcome of pediatric cystoscopy in male children presenting with LUTS in a tertiary medical college hospital.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This was a hospital-based observational study.

Study Place

The study was conducted in the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Pediatric Urology, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Study Period

The study was conducted from January 2022 to January 2025.

Study Population

Male children aged 1 month to 7 years presenting with lower urinary tract symptoms requiring cystoscopic evaluation were included.

Sample Size

A total of 312 cases were included in the study.

Inclusion Criteria

- Male children aged 1 month to 7 years
- Children presenting with lower urinary tract symptoms
- Patients who underwent cystoscopy

Exclusion Criteria

- Female children
- Patients with incomplete records
- Patients with severe coagulopathy or unfit for anesthesia

Data Collection

Data collected included age, presenting symptoms, imaging findings, indication for cystoscopy, cystoscopic findings, procedure performed, postoperative complications, and outcome.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Results were expressed as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians. Confidentiality was strictly maintained.

Results

A total of 312 male children aged 1 month to 7 years underwent cystoscopy evaluation for lower urinary tract symptoms. The mean age of the patients was 3.2 ± 1.8 years. Most patients were in the 1–5 years age group.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Patients (n = 312)

Age Group	Number	Percentage
1 month–1 year	56	17.9%
1–3 years	106	34.0%
3–5 years	87	27.9%
5–7 years	63	20.2%
Total	312	100%

Table 2: Presenting Symptoms

Symptoms	Number	Percentage
Poor urinary stream	131	42.0%
Recurrent UTI	119	38.1%
Straining during micturition	97	31.1%
Urinary retention	56	17.9%
Hematuria	34	10.9%
Dribbling of urine	28	9.0%
Frequency/urgency	50	16.0%

Table 3: Indications for Cystoscopy

Indication	Number	Percentage
Suspected PUV	125	40.1%
Recurrent UTI	81	26.0%
Voiding dysfunction	44	14.1%
Hematuria	25	8.0%
Suspected urethral stricture	22	7.1%
Ureterocele evaluation	15	4.8%
Total	312	100%

Table 4: Cystoscopic Findings

Findings	Number	Percentage
Posterior urethral valve	112	35.9%
Cystitis	56	17.9%
Urethral stricture	37	11.9%
Bladder trabeculation	31	9.9%
Ureterocele	19	6.1%
Normal findings	44	14.1%
Foreign body	6	1.9%
Diverticulum	7	2.2%
Total	312	100%

Table 5: Procedures Performed

Procedure	Number
Diagnostic cystoscopy only	184
Valve fulguration	97
Urethral dilatation	19
DJ stent removal	6
Foreign body removal	6
Total	312

Therapeutic intervention was performed in 128 patients (41.0%), while diagnostic cystoscopy only was performed in 184 patients (59.0%).

Table 6: Postoperative Complications

Complication	Number	Percentage
Mild hematuria	13	4.2%
Fever	6	1.9%
Urinary retention	3	1.0%
UTI	3	1.0%
No complication	287	92.0%
Total	312	100%

Minor postoperative complications occurred in 25 patients (8.0%). All complications were managed conservatively.

Discussion

Pediatric lower urinary tract symptoms are common and may arise from congenital obstruction, infection, inflammatory pathology, or functional abnormalities. Early diagnosis is important to prevent long-term renal damage and bladder dysfunction.^{15,16}

In the present study, the majority of patients were between 1 and 5 years of age. Similar findings were reported by Smith et al. and Nasir et al., where obstructive voiding symptoms commonly presented during infancy and early childhood.^{17,18}

Poor urinary stream and recurrent urinary tract infection were the most frequent presenting complaints in this

study. Comparable observations were documented in previous studies evaluating pediatric LUTS and cystoscopic assessment.^{19,20}

Posterior urethral valve was the most common cystoscopic finding, accounting for 112 cases (35.9%). This reflects the predominance of congenital obstructive pathology among male children with LUTS. Similar frequencies have been reported in previous pediatric urology studies.^{21,22}

Therapeutic intervention was performed in 128 patients (41.0%), demonstrating the dual diagnostic and therapeutic utility of pediatric cystoscopy. Early fulguration has been associated with improved bladder dynamics and preservation of renal function.^{23,24}

Urethral stricture and bladder trabeculation were also common findings in the current study. Chronic bladder outlet obstruction may produce secondary bladder wall changes and recurrent urinary infection. Cystoscopy permits accurate assessment of the severity and extent of these abnormalities.^{25,26}

Normal cystoscopic findings were observed in 44 patients (14.1%), indicating that cystoscopy also helps exclude significant pathology in cases with inconclusive radiological investigations. Similar findings were observed by Robinson et al. in flexible cystoscopy studies.⁴

The complication rate in the present series was low, with minor complications observed in 25 patients (8.0%), including transient hematuria, fever, temporary urinary retention, and urinary tract infection; all were managed conservatively, and no major urethral injury or mortality occurred. Previous studies have similarly demonstrated the safety profile of pediatric cystoscopy.^{5,27}

The present study highlights the importance of pediatric cystoscopy in comprehensive lower urinary tract evaluation, especially in resource-limited settings where advanced urodynamic studies may not be widely available. Early cystoscopic assessment may facilitate prompt diagnosis and timely management, thereby improving long-term urinary and renal outcomes.^{28,29}

Limitations

This was a single-center study limited to male children. Long-term follow-up regarding renal function and bladder dynamics was not available. Multicenter studies are recommended.

Conclusion

Pediatric cystoscopy is a highly valuable and safe diagnostic modality for lower urinary tract symptom evaluation in children. It provides direct visualization of lower urinary tract pathology and enables simultaneous therapeutic intervention. Posterior urethral valve was the most common finding in this study. Early cystoscopy evaluation can significantly improve diagnosis, management, and outcome in pediatric patients with LUTS.

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