## **INVITED REVIEW**

# Update on Greenlight laser vaporization (PVP) 2014

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Received: 10 October 2014 / Accepted: 31 October 2014 / Published online: 5 November 2014 © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2014

#### **Abstract**

*Purpose* To asses the (1) outcomes and (2) intraoperative, perioperative, and long-term complications of photoselective vaporization of the prostate (PVP) with Greenlight laser.

Methods A systematic review of outcomes and complications of PVP was conducted. The article selection process was performed according to PRISMA guidelines and included publications published between 2009 and 2014. Results All generations of PVP (80, 120, 180 W) lead to a significant improvement of micturition symptoms (IPSS, QoL) and voiding parameters (Q max, PVR volume) during follow-up. Data on sexual function are heterogeneous and suggest a trend toward decline in erectile function in men with sustained preoperative erection. The rate of intraoperative complications is low. Data on peri- and postoperative complications show a large variation that mainly can

Conclusions PVP leads to a statistically significant and clinically relevant improvement of voiding parameters and micturition symptoms in patients with prostates <100 ml. The technique is characterized by a high degree of intraand perioperative safety. Long-term evidence on functional outcomes and complications beyond 3 years from RCTs is currently missing for all generations of the Greenlight laser.

be attributed to heterogeneity in documentation.

**Keywords** Lower urinary tract symptoms · Benign prostate enlargement · Photoselective vaporization of the prostate · Laser prostatectomy · Outcomes · Complications

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#### Introduction

Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) is the gold standard treatment of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) due to benign prostate enlargement (BPE) in patients with a prostate volume <80 ml [1]. In the last two decades, several alternative surgical techniques challenged the predominance of TURP [2]. Among them, vaporization of the prostate (PVP) with the GreenLight® laser became one of the established alternatives to TURP in the treatment of men with LUTS and a prostate volume <80 ml [1]. Encouraged by early results, a relatively easy-to-learn technique and accompanied by marketing of the manufacturer, PVP nowadays is widespread used among urologists. Since the introduction of PVP with the 80 W laser in 2002, the laser system underwent several modifications in fiber design, fiber life and maximum power output of the laser generator [3]. Thus, results of early reports may not easily be extrapolated to predict outcomes of the currently used laser hardware. The objective of this comprehensive review is to provide an update of the functional outcomes as well as the complications of PVP.

# Materials and methods

A comprehensive review was carried out on a literature search through PubMed/Medline. The literature search aimed at identifying all papers reporting results of studies on PVP in English language between January 2009 and August 2014. The following key words were used in the database search: Photoselective vaporization of the prostate, Greenlight laser vaporization of the prostate, 180 W XPS laser prostate, 120 W HPS laser prostate, and 80 W



KTP laser prostate. The reference lists of all systematic reviews in the field were also searched to identify articles of particular relevance to the topics of the current review. Analysis of publications was categorized by the three systems of the Greenlight laser: 80 W KTP, 120 W HPS, and 180 W XPS. With respect to randomized controlled trials, inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as baseline data of patients were studied. Quality of randomized controlled trials was assessed by the Jadad score [4]. Complications were categorized by intra- and perioperative complications and postoperative complications. Postoperative complications were rated according to the Clavien–Dindo classification [5].

## Results

#### Functional outcomes

Only three randomized controlled trials were published during the search period comparing PVP with the 80 W KTP laser to monopolar TURP (M-TURP) [6, 7] or Holmium laser ablation of the prostate (HOLAP) [8, 9]. In addition, case series were published with a maximum follow-up of

5 years [10–12]. As shown in Table 1, PVP with the 80 W KTP laser lead to a statistically significant short-term and long-term improvement of voiding symptoms (IPSS, QoL) and micturition parameters (Q max, PVR volume) in RCTs [6–9]. Data on PSA reduction were not available from any of these RCTs. Case series of the 80 W laser with a followup of 60 months further support the long-term improvement in voiding parameters and micturition symptoms [10, 11]. In contrast, in one case series with a 2-year follow-up, the improvement of IPSS and maximum flow rate seems inferior to other series [12]. The impact of 80 W PVP on erectile function was analyzed in two case series including 149 and 150 patients, respectively [13, 14]. After a maximum followup of 12 and 24 months, the IIEF scores for patients with preoperative erectile function (defined as IIEF >19) were significantly decreased in both studies [13, 14] (Table 2).

With respect to functional results of the 120 W laser, five RCTs in comparison with M-TURP [15–18] or M-TURP and bipolar TURP (B-TURP) [19] with a maximum follow-up of 36 months are available. In all studies, a significant improvement of voiding parameters and symptoms could be noticed [15–19]. One study analyzed the change in urodynamic parameters and found a significant improvement in PdetQmax and BOOI values at 2-years follow-up

Table 1 Functional outcomes of PVP in RCTs according to laser type

Study	Number of	Laser	Primary outcome	Follow-up	IPSS	QoL	Qmax	PVR	PSA	Jadad
	patients	type (W)		(months)	Mean pre	operativ	e value → me	an value at l	last follow-up	score for RCTs
Bouchier- Hayes [6]	PVP: 59 M-TURP: 50	80	NA	12	$25 \rightarrow 9$	5 → 2	$8.8 \to 18.6$	129 → 22	NA	3
Elshal [8, 9]	PVP: 52 HOLAP: 57	80	Change in IPSS	70	$18 \rightarrow 8$	4 → 2	$6.4 \rightarrow 15$	$215 \rightarrow 60$	NA	2
Mohanty [7]	PVP: 60 M-TURP: 57	80	Subjective and objective parameters	12	20 → 6	$4 \rightarrow 2$	$7.4 \to 20.1$	$146 \rightarrow 24$	$2.5 \rightarrow NA$	4
Al-Ansari [15]	PVP: 60 M-TURP:60	120	Subjective and objective parameters	36	27 → 10	NA	6.9 → 17	53 → 11	$2.6 \rightarrow 1.5$	3
Pereira-Correia [17]	PVP: 10 M-TURP: 10	120	Urodynamic evaluation, IPSS	24	$22 \rightarrow 7$	NA	$10 \rightarrow 20.5$	$150 \rightarrow 4$	NA	2
Capitán [16]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50	120	Superiority of IPSS	24	$24 \rightarrow 8$	5 → 1	$8.0 \rightarrow 23$	NA	$3.7 \rightarrow 2.1$	3
Kumar [19]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50 B-TURP	120	Subjective and objective parameters	12	$20 \rightarrow 7$	$4 \rightarrow 2$	$6.7 \rightarrow 19.6$	$143 \rightarrow 31$	$2.4 \rightarrow NA$	2
Lukacs [18]	PVP: 69 M-TURP: 70	120	Non-inferiority of PVP regarding IPSS	12	22 → 6	NA	$7.8 \to 16.7$	$90 \rightarrow 0$	$2.4 \rightarrow 1.8$	3
Bachmann [21]	PVP: 136 M/B-TURP: 133	180	Non-inferiority of PVP regarding IPSS and Q max at 6 months	6	$21 \rightarrow 7$	$5 \rightarrow 2$	$9.5 \rightarrow 23.3$	$110 \rightarrow 38$	$2.7 \rightarrow 1.4$	3

NA not available



World J Urol (2015) 33:531-537

Table 2 Functional outcomes of selected PVP case series according to laser type

Study	Number of patients	Laser type (W)	Percentage of patients with cath	Mean prostate volume	Follow-up (months)	IPSS	QoL	Qmax	PVR	PSA
Malde [11]	115	80	26 %	56	60	22 <i>→</i> 9	NA	8.0 → 13.9	321 → 76	$4.2 \rightarrow 3.4$
Hai [10]	321	80	NA	55	60	$24 \rightarrow 5$	$4 \rightarrow 1$	$8.6 \rightarrow 21.1$	$170 \rightarrow 28$	$3.2 \rightarrow 2.2$
Kim [12]	169	80	None	42	24	$19 \rightarrow 13$	$4 \rightarrow 2$	$10.0 \rightarrow 11.3$	$43 \rightarrow 22$	NA
Tasci [26]	550	120	NA	72	36	$23 \rightarrow 6$	$4 \rightarrow 1$	$9.0 \rightarrow 19.5$	$125 \rightarrow 10$	$3.6 \rightarrow 3.6$
Bachmann [22]	201	180	25 %	68	6	$20 \rightarrow 9$	$4 \rightarrow 1$	$8.4 \rightarrow 21.0$	$190 \rightarrow 29$	$5.5 \rightarrow 2.0$
Chung [24]	85	180	27 %	51	3	$25 \rightarrow 7$	$5 \rightarrow 2$	$7.7 \rightarrow 18.4$	$147 \rightarrow 38$	NA
Hueber [25]	622	180	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Campbell [23]	50	180	14 %	68	3	$20 \rightarrow 7$	$4 \rightarrow 2$	$9 \rightarrow 26$	$143 \rightarrow 32$	3.6

NA not available

[17]. The rate of improvement was found to be comparable between 120 W PVP and TURP [17]. Over the course of 2 years, the improvement of IPSS storage symptoms and voiding symptoms was comparable in another RCT comparing 120 W PVP and TURP [16]. Sexual outcomes were analyzed in two RCTs [18, 19]. Kumar et al. [19] report no significant differences in IIEF-5 scores between patients who underwent M-TURP, B-TURP, and 120 W PVP. However, it has to be acknowledged that the mean IIEF-5 scores in these groups ranged around 16, with only a small proportion of patients with sufficient preoperative erectile function [19]. Lukacs et al. [18] analyzed the postoperative course of erectile function and sexual satisfaction in depth. The authors found an improved or unchanged sexual satisfaction after surgery compared with baseline in around 86 % of the patients after PVP compared to 77 % following TURP. When improved and unchanged patients were grouped and compared with worsened patients in both arms of the study, evolution of ejaculation and erection appeared to be superior in the 120 W PVP arm of the study [18]. One larger case series including 550 consecutive patients who underwent PVP with the 120 W laser found a significant improvement of voiding parameters and symptoms over the postoperative course of 3 years [20]. However, as in the majority of case series, at 36 months less than 10 % of the patients were available for follow-up, which has to be acknowledged as major limitation.

With the 180 W laser, one RCT in comparison with M-and B-TURP with a follow-up of currently 6 months [21] and four case series is available [22–25]. The GOLI-ATH study included 281 men who were randomized to treatment with the 180 W laser or TURP [21]. It is the first study powered to demonstrate the non-inferiority of 180 W PVP over TURP with regard to IPSS and Qmax at 6 months. At 6 months, voiding symptoms and parameters significantly improved compared to the preoperative values with a non-inferiority of PVP over TURP [21]. Sexual

function was not evaluated at 6 months. One larger international case series including 201 patients [22] as well as two smaller series with 50 and 85 men [23, 24] report a significant improvement of all relevant parameters at 3- and 6-month follow-up, respectively. Sexual function was only analyzed in one study and showed a reduction in median IIEF score from 21.5 at baseline to 19- at 3-month follow-up [23]. As the maximum follow-up of data on the 180 W laser currently only is 6 months, further results from the GOLIATH study and larger case series have to be awaited.

#### Complications

The definition and documentation of complications varies strongly between different studies. In recent years, the Clavien–Dindo classification of postoperative complications found widespread use and facilitates the comparison between techniques and different studies.

#### Intra- and perioperative complications

Intraoperative complications are rarely reported in RCTs. This may be attributed to the lack of a standardized reporting scheme of intraoperative complications in endourology. Only few RCTs report intraoperative complications including intraoperative bleeding and capsule perforation [8, 15, 16, 19]. No TUR syndrome or capsule perforation was reported in any of the randomized trials with all PVP techniques, and the rate of intraoperative bleeding was reported at 6 % [8, 15, 16, 19] (Table 3). Details on perioperative and early postoperative complications are listed in Table 4. A huge variation in the incidence of complications can be noted. This may mainly be attributed to differences of documentation between studies. For examples, the severity of hematuria can range from transient staining of the urine to clot retention with the need for surgical revision under anesthesia. Assigning different Clavien-Dindo grades to



Table 3 Intraoperative complications of PVP in RCTs

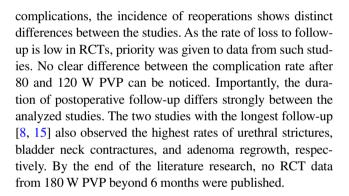
Study	Number of patients	Laser type (W)	Bleeding n (%)	Capsule perforation n (%)	TUR syndrome n (%)
Bouchier-Hayes [6]	PVP: 59 M-TURP: 50	80	NA	NA	NA
Elshal [8, 9]	PVP: 52 HOLAP: 57	80	3 (5.7)	NA	NA
Mohanty [7]	PVP: 60 M-TURP: 57	80	NA	NA	NA
Al-Ansari [15]	PVP: 60 M-TURP:60	120	0	0	0
Pereira-Correia [17]	PVP: 10 M-TURP: 10	120	NA	NA	NA
Capitán [16]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50	120	0	NA	0
Kumar [19]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50 B-TURP	120	NA	NA	0
Lukacs [18]	PVP: 69 M-TURP: 70	120	NA	NA	NA
Bachmann [21]	PVP: 136 M/B-TURP: 133	180	NA	NA	NA

the same kind of complication may be able to properly address these differences. However, different Clavien—Dindo grades were only assigned to the same condition in detail in one study [21].

The rate of postoperative hematuria ranges from none to 11.8 % with the highest rates reported from the 180 W laser. However, only 3 % of the patients had to undergo invasive treatment for hematuria. Increased storage symptoms associated with pain are observed frequently after BPO surgery. One study reported irritative symptoms in almost all patients treated with 120 W PVP [15]. In contrast, a thorough evaluation of postoperative dysuria after 120 W PVP [18] found 10.3 % of the patients to experience postoperative dysuria. In addition, no significant difference in comparison with TURP could be noticed [18, 21]. Urinary tract infections were reported relatively frequently after 180 W PVP [21]. However, no uniform definition of infection was applied in the study, and it is unclear whether positive urine culture results were awaited in all patients prior to initiation of antimicrobial therapy. Transient urinary incontinence was reported in up to 50 % of the patients. However, the assessment of incontinence varied between studies, and different methods were used to evaluate the severity of incontinence. Thus, further research and high-quality data are needed to properly assess the incidence postoperative incontinence.

# Postoperative complications

Table 5 summarizes the rate of postoperative complications (>6 months). Similar to intra- and perioperative



# Discussion

Photoselective vaporization of the prostate has become an established treatment alternative to TURP for men with benign prostate enlargement. In recent years, several randomized trials in comparison with TURP or other laser techniques could show comparable functional outcomes. Based on the evidence provided by several studies, all generations of PVP (80 W, 120 W, 180 W) lead to a significant improvement of voiding parameters and symptoms during follow-up. The rate of intra- and perioperative complications seems low. The reoperation rate appears comparable to TURP, with limitations in trials with longer follow-up.

Regardless of the evidence that could be accumulated in recent years, this review also highlights limitations, unmet needs, and areas for further improvement. First, long-term evidence of safety and efficacy from RCTs beyond 3-year follow-up is still missing for PVP and currently seems



World J Urol (2015) 33:531–537 535

 Table 4 Perioperative and early postoperative (≤6 months) complications of PVP in RCTs

Study	Number of patients Laser type (W) Hematuria, bleeding $n\left(\%\right)$ Clavien–Dind grade	Laser type (W)	Hematuria, bleeding n (%) Clavien–Dindo grade	Irritative symptoms, pain, discomfort $n$ (%) Clavien–Dindo grade	Urinary tract infection n (%) Clavien-Dindo grade	Retention n (%) Clavien-Dindo grade	Urinary incontinence <i>n</i> (%) Clavien–Dindo grade
Bouchier-Hayes [6] PVP: 59 M-TURE	PVP: 59 M-TURP: 50	08	4 (6.7)	5 (8.5)	5 (8.5)	1 (1.7)	NA
Elshal [8, 9]	PVP: 52 HOLAP: 57	80	1 (1.9), °2	2 (3.8), °1 2 (3.8), °2	3 (5.7), °2	6 (11.5), °2	5 (9.6), °2
Mohanty [7]	PVP: 60 M-TURP: 57	80	0	15 (25)	5 (8.3)	4 (6.7)	NA
Al-Ansari [15]	PVP: 60 M-TURP:60	120	0	56 (93.3)	NA	0	NA
Pereira-Correia [17] PVP: 10 M-TURP	PVP: 10 M-TURP: 10	120	NA	NA	NA	NA	5 (50)
Capitán [16]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50	120	6 (12), °1	NA	4 (8), °2	4 (8), °1	NA
Kumar [19]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50 B-TURP	120	0	5 (8.6), °2	4 (6.9), °2	5 (8.6), °3a	NA
Lukacs [18]	PVP: 69 M-TURP: 70	120	7 (10.3)	7 (10.3)	2 (2.9)	NA	NA
Bachmann [21]	PVP: 136 M/B-TURP: 133	180	9 (6.6), °1 3 (2.2), °2 2 (1.5), °3a 2 (1.5), °3b	22 (16.2), °1 4 (2.9), °2	5 (3.7), °1 20 (14.7), °2	8 (5.9), °1 7 (5.1), °3a 2 (1.5), °3b	12 (8.8), °1 3 (2.2), °2



Table 5 Postoperative complications (>6 months) of PVP in RCTs

Study	Number of patients	Laser type (W)	Urethral stricture <i>n</i> (%) Clavien–Dindo grade	Bladder neck contracture n (%) Clavien–Dindo grade	Adenoma regrowth n (%) Clavien– Dindo grade	Urinary incontinence <i>n</i> (%) Clavien–Dindo grade
Bouchier-Hayes [6]	PVP: 59 M-TURP: 50	80	0	0	6 (10.2), °3	0
Elshal [8, 9]	PVP: 52 HOLAP: 57	80	4 (7.7), °3	5 (9.6), °3	4 (7.7), °3	2 (3.8), °2
Mohanty [7]	PVP: 60 M-TURP: 57	80	1 (1.7), °3	1 (1.7), °3	0	NA
Al-Ansari [15]	PVP: 60 M-TURP:60	120	0	4 (7.4), °3	6 (11), °3	0
Pereira-Correia [17]	PVP: 10 M-TURP: 10	120	NA	NA	NA	NA
Capitán [16]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50	120	2 (4), °2 1 (2), °3	0	0	1 (2), °2
Kumar [19]	PVP: 50 M-TURP: 50 B-TURP	120	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	NA	NA
Lukacs [18]	PVP: 69 M-TURP: 70	120	NA	NA	NA	NA

unlikely that these data will be provided in the near future. In that context, cohort studies seem largely insufficient to provide high-quality data as lost to follow-up is high. Second, in the period of literature research, no novel high-quality data on the safety and efficacy of PVP in comparison with open prostatectomy in patients with larger (>100 ml) prostates were published. Thus, high-level evidence on PVP in patients with large prostates is missing. Third, it has to be noticed that while the assessment of effectiveness of PVP seems standardized by questionnaires and measurable data, documentation of complications needs further improvement. Although the Clavien-Dindo Classification of complications may not seem perfectly suitable for the grading of complications in endourology, investigators should be encouraged to adhere to this classification. The comparative evaluation of surgical techniques is largely depending on the quality of data on complications. Thus, it is crucial that complications are not only documented but also graded according to the measures that had to be taken for resolution. Strict adherence will improve the quality of future clinical trials and ultimately the quality of treatment we are providing for our patients.

#### **Conclusions**

Based on the evidence provided by several randomized studies, all generations of PVP (80 W, 120 W, 180 W) lead to a significant improvement of voiding parameters and symptoms. The rate of intra- and perioperative complications appears low.

The reoperation rate seems comparable to TURP, with limitations in trials with longer follow-up. More evidence is needed to support the use of PVP in patients with large prostates.

**Conflict of interest** M. Rieken: No conflict of interest. A. Bachmann: Principal investigator of the GOLIATH study, which was sponsored by American Medical Systems (AMS), is advisor for AMS, and receives honoraria for presentations.

**Ethical standard** All human studies have been approved by the appropriate ethics committee and have therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments.

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