Conservative treatment in patients with severe congenital scoliosis – presentation of three cases

Hans-Rudolf Weiss
Asklepios Katharina Schroth Spinal Deformities Rehabilitation Centre
Korczakstr. 2, D-55566 Bad Sobernheim, Germany

BACKGROUND: In view of the very limited data about conservative treatment of patients with congenital scoliosis (CS) available, early surgery is suggested already in mild cases with formation failures in the first three years of life. It is common sense that patients with failures of segmentation will not benefit from conservative treatment at all and the same applies to failures of formation with curves of > 50 degrees in infancy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Two patients with rib synostosis denied surgery before entering the pubertal growth spurt. These patients have been treated conservatively with braces and Scoliosis In-Patient Rehabilitation (SIR) and now are beyond the pubertal growth spurt. One patient with a formation failure and a curve of > 50 degrees lumbar has been treated with the help of braces and physiotherapy from 1.6 years on and is still under treatment now at the age of 15 years.

RESULTS: Severe decompensation was prevented in the two patients with failure of segmentation, however a severe thoracic deformity is evident with underdeveloped lung function and severe restrictive ventilation disorder. The patient with failure of formation is well developed now without cosmetic or physical complaints although his curve progressed at the end of the growth spurt due to mal-compliance.

CONCLUSIONS: Failures of segmentation should be advised to have surgery before entering the pubertal growth spurt. In case they deny, conservative treatment can at least in part be beneficial. For patients with failures of formation conservative treatment should be suggested in the first place because long-term outcomes of early surgery beyond pubertal growth spurt are not yet revealed.