

# Patient-Reported Outcomes and Function after Surgical Repair of the Ulnar Collateral Ligament of the Thumb

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**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose of this study was to report prospectively collected patient-reported outcomes of patients who underwent open thumb ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) repair and to find risk factors associated with poor patient-reported outcomes.

## **METHODS:**

Patients undergoing open surgical repair for a complete thumb UCL rupture were included between December 2011 and February 2021. Michigan Hand Outcomes Questionnaire (MHQ) Total Scores at baseline were compared to MHQ Total Scores at 3 and 12 months. Associations between the 12-month MHQ Total Score and several variables (i.e., sex, injury to surgery time, K-wire immobilization) were analyzed.

## **RESULTS:**

Seventy-six patients were included. From baseline to 3 and 12 months after surgery, patients improved significantly with a mean MHQ Total Score of 65 (standard deviation [SD] 15) to 78 (SD 14) and 87 (SD 12), respectively. We did not find any differences in outcomes between patients who underwent surgery in the acute (<3 weeks) setting compared to a delayed setting (<6 months).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:**

We found that patient-reported outcomes improve significantly both 3 and 12 months after open surgical repair of the thumb UCL compared to baseline. We did not find an association between injury to surgery time and lower MHQ Total Scores. This suggests that acute repair for full-thickness UCL tears might not always be necessary.

