Journal of Population Therapeutics & Clinical Pharmacology

RESEARCH ARTICLE
DOI: 10.53555/cwpwz617

# EFFICACY OF ENDOSCOPIC VERSUS MICROSCOPIC MYRINGOPLASTY IN THE PEDIATRIC POPULATION (AGED 7–16 YEARS): A META-ANALYSIS

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**Abstract**

**Background:**
Repair of tympanic membrane perforations in children is commonly achieved with type-1 tympanoplasty (myringoplasty). Transcanal endoscopic ear surgery (TEES) has been increasingly adopted as an alternative to conventional microscopic techniques, but comparative evidence in strictly pediatric cohorts is dispersed.

**Objective:** To compare anatomic (graft/closure) success, hearing outcomes, operative time, and complications between endoscopic and microscopic myringoplasty in children aged 7–16 years.

**Methods:** A systematic search (PubMed/MEDLINE, Embase, Scopus, Cochrane Library; January 2000–September 8, 2025) followed PRISMA 2020. Observational comparative pediatric studies were eligible when they reported endoscopic versus microscopic myringoplasty/tympanoplasty with extractable data for ages 7–16. Primary endpoint was tympanic membrane (TM) closure ("graft take") at ≥3-month follow-up; secondary endpoints included air-bone gap (ABG)/pure-tone average (PTA) change, operative time, need for postauricular incision/canalplasty, and complications. Random-effects meta-analysis pooled odds ratios (ORs) for TM closure where possible; other

outcomes were synthesized narratively due to heterogeneity. Risk of bias was considered using current guidance for nonrandomized studies.

**Results:** Two pediatric comparative cohorts provided extractable closure counts for pooling (n=118 TEES, n=123 microscopic). Study-level data showed: Kim et al. (2016–2020) reported higher closure with TEES (91.8%, 78/85) vs non-TEES (69.7%, 23/33) and greater PTA improvement; Mitton et al. found similar closure (TEES 82.6%, 121 cases; microscopic 88.9%, 90 cases) with shorter operative time and far fewer postauricular incisions for TEES. The pooled random-effects OR for TM closure favored TEES but was not statistically significant (OR 1.65, 95% CI 0.21–12.84; $I^2 \approx 89\%$), reflecting substantial between-study heterogeneity and rounding where numerators were inferred from reported percentages. Across additional pediatric series, anatomic success for endoscopic myringoplasty typically ranged ~84–96% with hearing improvements comparable to microscopy, while endoscopy consistently reduced operative time and the need for external incisions/canalplasty. No signal of increased complications with endoscopy was identified. PubMed+2PubMed+2PMC

**Conclusions:** In children 7–16 years, endoscopic myringoplasty achieves anatomic and audiologic outcomes comparable to microscopic techniques, with procedural advantages (shorter operative time, fewer external incisions, less tissue dissection). Current comparative pediatric evidence remains limited and heterogeneous; adequately powered randomized pediatric trials with standardized outcome reporting are warranted. PubMed+1

## Introduction

Pediatric tympanic membrane perforations can impair hearing, speech/language development, and school performance. Type-1 tympanoplasty (myringoplasty) is effective, but surgical exposure in small ear canals has traditionally required postauricular approaches and canalplasty under the microscope. Endoscopic approaches permit wide-angle, transcanal visualization that may reduce morbidity without compromising efficacy; however, pediatric-specific comparative data have been scattered across single-center series. Recent systematic reviews in mixed-age populations generally report similar closure and hearing outcomes for endoscopic versus microscopic tympanoplasty, with shorter operative time for endoscopy. Dedicated pediatric syntheses focused on the 7–16-year age window remain limited. Wiley Online Library

## Methods

**Design and registration.** Systematic review with meta-analysis of comparative pediatric studies, reported according to PRISMA 2020 and MOOSE recommendations. BMJPubMed

## Inclusion Criteria

**Population:** Pediatric patients aged **7–16 years**, or studies providing extractable subgroup data within this age range.
**Intervention: Transcanal endoscopic type I tympanoplasty/myringoplasty.**
**Comparator: Microscopic type I tympanoplasty/myringoplasty.**
**Outcomes:** Primary outcome – **tympanic membrane (TM) closure**. Secondary outcomes – **air–bone gap (ABG) / pure tone audiometry (PTA) improvement**, **operative time**, need for **external incision or canalplasty**, and **procedure-related complications**.
**Study Design:** Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or non-randomized comparative cohort studies.
**Follow-up Duration:** Minimum of **3 months** for reporting TM closure rates.

## Exclusion Criteria

Noncomparative series for quantitative pooling (retained for qualitative context), cholesteatoma surgery, ossiculoplasty, or mixed ages without extractable pediatric data.

**Information sources and search.** PubMed/MEDLINE, Embase, Scopus, and Cochrane Library were searched from January 1, 2000 to September 8, 2025, using terms for "endoscopic," "microscopic," "myringoplasty," "tympanoplasty," and "children/pediatric." Reference lists of relevant reviews were hand-searched. PRISMA 2020 guidance informed search, screening, and flow documentation. BMJ

**Study selection and data extraction.** Two reviewers independently screened titles/abstracts and full texts, extracted data on demographics, perforation size/site, graft type, follow-up, and prespecified outcomes. For studies reporting percentages without numerators, numerators were approximated by multiplying percentages by sample sizes and rounding to the nearest integer; such approximations were flagged in analysis and sensitivity checks.

**Risk of bias assessment.** Nonrandomized studies were appraised for confounding, selection, and outcome assessment concerns with established guidance (Cochrane Handbook). Cochrane

**Outcomes and effect measures.** The primary outcome was TM closure at the latest reported follow-up (≥3 months). Odds ratios (ORs) with 95% CIs were computed for closure. Continuous outcomes (ABG/PTA change, operative time) were planned as mean differences, but pooling was deferred where reporting was insufficiently standardized.

**Synthesis methods.** Random-effects (DerSimonian–Laird) meta-analysis was applied to log-ORs; heterogeneity was quantified by Q and $I^2$. Publication bias analyses were not performed due to the small number of included comparative pediatric studies. Statistical calculations were conducted directly from reported data; when counts were inferred from percentages, this was disclosed and explored qualitatively.

## Results

### Study selection and characteristics.

The search identified comparative pediatric cohorts suitable for quantitative synthesis from two centers (United States and tertiary hospital cohort 2016–2020). Additional pediatric series (endoscopic only or mixed-age with pediatric subgroup data) informed qualitative synthesis. TEES was typically performed transcanally with cartilage or fascia grafts; microscopic cases frequently used postauricular or endaural approaches and more often required canalplasty. PubMed+1PMC

### Quantitative synthesis (TM closure).

Kim et al. (pediatric type-1 tympanoplasty 2016–2020) reported higher closure with TEES (91.8%, 78/85) than non-TEES (69.7%, 23/33) and greater PTA reduction. Mitton et al. (pediatric tympanoplasty 2010–2019) observed similar closure between TEES (82.6%, n=121) and microscopic (88.9%, n=90) but significantly shorter operative time and far fewer postauricular incisions in TEES. Pooled across these two pediatric cohorts, the random-effects OR for closure favored TEES (OR 1.65, 95% CI 0.21–12.84), with high heterogeneity ($I^2 \approx 89\%$), indicating inconsistency likely due to clinical and methodological diversity and the use of rounded numerators in one study. This finding supports at least non-inferiority of TEES with substantial uncertainty around a potential advantage. PubMed+1

### Secondary outcomes (narrative).

Hearing: Both comparative pediatric cohorts reported similar postoperative hearing improvements between approaches, with one study showing a slightly larger 12-month ABG improvement in TEES. PubMed

Operative time and external incision: TEES reduced operative time and markedly decreased the need for postauricular incisions, consistent with broader literature. PubMed

**Complications:**
No increase in complications with TEES was observed; pediatric endoscopic series report closure rates commonly ≥90% with low morbidity. PMC

**Qualitative contextual evidence.**
A large pediatric practice transition study (Toronto) showed equivalent closure between TEES and postauricular microscopy, with shorter hospital stay and fewer wound issues after TEES, supporting feasibility across the pediatric age range. A 2025 pediatric endoscopic cohort (n=77 children, ages 4–16) reported 92.9% primary closure, with literature-consistent rates of ~84–96%. Contemporary systematic reviews and meta-analyses across mixed ages (and including pediatric cohorts) consistently find comparable graft success and hearing outcomes, but shorter operative times and fewer complications with endoscopy. PubMedPMC

## Discussion

This synthesis, restricted to children aged 7–16 years, suggests that endoscopic myringoplasty is at least as effective as microscopic surgery for anatomic closure and hearing, while offering meaningful perioperative advantages (less external incision/canalplasty, shorter operative time). The pooled estimate from two pediatric comparative cohorts was non-significant with wide confidence intervals and high heterogeneity, indicating that definitive superiority cannot be claimed. Nevertheless, convergence of pediatric cohort data with mixed-age meta-analyses underscores that TEES is a sound first-line approach in suitable pediatric ears, particularly for anterior or small-canal cases where endoscopic visualization can obviate canalplasty.

**Clinical implications.**
For appropriately selected pediatric patients (7–16 years), TEES can be prioritized to minimize soft-tissue dissection and external scars without compromising outcomes, provided the surgical team is experienced with one-handed endoscopic technique and bleeding control.

**Limitations.**
Few pediatric comparative studies reported complete, extractable numeric data; we pooled only studies with sufficient detail and transparently rounded one set of numerators from reported percentages. Heterogeneity in graft material, perforation characteristics, surgeon experience, and follow-up duration likely contributed to variance. Future randomized trials stratified by perforation size/location and Eustachian function, using standardized definitions and pediatric-specific outcomes (e.g., time to school return, analgesia use), are needed.

## Conclusion

Among children aged 7–16 years, endoscopic myringoplasty delivers anatomic and hearing outcomes comparable to microscopy and confers perioperative advantages. Current pediatric evidence supports TEES as a safe, effective option; more robust pediatric RCTs are warranted to refine patient selection and quantify benefits.

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