

# COMPARISON OF THE MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE AND ULTRASONOGRAPHY FOR DIAGNOSING ACUTE APPENDICITIS

## **ABSTRACT:**

**BACKGROUND:** Acute appendicitis can be diagnosed much accurately by using Modified Alvarado score and Ultrasound together in the clinical setting.

**OBJECTIVES:** Comparison of the diagnostic accuracy of Modified Alvarado score and Ultrasonographic findings in acute appendicitis.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** A total of 200 patients of age group ranging from 4-65 years, both male and female, with clinical features suggestive of acute appendicitis were selected randomly who visited the tertiary health care center. Data from the patients regarding their Modified Alvarado score, ultrasonographic findings and histopathological reports were collected for the study. Statistical analysis was performed for the results of both Modified Alvarado score and Ultrasonographic findings in contrast to the pathology reports.

**RESULTS:** The study included 200 patients, with maximum incidence of acute appendicitis seen in Males (70.5%) and among 21-30 age groups (40.5%). The sensitivity, specificity of Modified Alvarado Score was 89.47% and 73.33%, with Positive Predictive Value, Negative Predictive Value and diagnostic accuracy being 40%, 73.33% and 45 % respectively. Ultrasonography revealed 89.58% sensitivity, 15.62 % specificity, Positive predictive value and NPV were 75.88% and 50%, and diagnostic accuracy was 72%. The negative appendectomies rates accounted to 15%.

**CONCLUSION:** It is advised that both Modified Alvarado score and Ultrasound can be used together to diagnose acute appendicitis. This can be useful in decreasing the negative appendectomies and hence reduce the morbidity and mortality

**KEYWORDS:** Acute appendicitis, Histopathological findings, Modified Alvarado Score, Ultrasonography.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Acute appendicitis is the most common and demanding surgical emergency with a lifetime prevalence of 1 in 7 cases <sup>[1,2]</sup>. Fitz presented a classic paper 100 years ago, on the clinical features of the acute appendicitis that recommended the earliest removal of the inflamed appendix <sup>[3]</sup>. The high mortality and morbidity in appendicitis owes to the complications such as abscess, perforation and peritonitis, hence early diagnosis is of paramount importance <sup>[2]</sup>. Even with a high level of clinical suspicion, the negative appendectomy rates accounts for 15 - 30% <sup>[4, 5]</sup>. In the view of decreasing the negative appendectomies as well as the appendiceal rupture rates, a number of diagnostic modalities have been proposed. The recommended ones with acceptable diagnostic accuracy are clinical scoring system, ultrasonography, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and laparoscopy <sup>[6, 7, 8]</sup>. The Alvarado score is the most commonly used clinical scoring system, its modification which doesn't include the parameter of shift of neutrophils is not considered due to the non-availability in most emergency hospitals <sup>[9, 10, 11]</sup>. Amongst the available imaging modalities, graded compression ultrasonography is a cheap, fast, noninvasive and operator oriented method with diagnostic accuracy of 71-90% in acute appendicitis <sup>[12, 13, 14]</sup>. The usage of Modified Alvarado score and ultrasonography combined can help in decreasing the negative appendectomy rates <sup>[15]</sup>.

## **METHODS:**

This cross sectional retrospective study includes a total of 200 patients with a provisional diagnosis of acute appendicitis. The patients included were admitted and operated in the surgical department of Saveetha Medical College and Hospital, from February 2021 to July 2021. The patients diagnosed of appendicular abscess, appendicular lump, peritonitis and patients who were pregnant was excluded from the study. Written consent from the patients and assent from the parents/ guardians of the patients below 18 years of age were obtained.

## **CRITERIA FOR ACUTE APPENDICITIS BY MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE**

The Modified Alvarado Scoring System (MAS) criteria were applied to each patient of the study population. MAS SYSTEM components were migratory right iliac

fossa pain, nausea/vomiting, anorexia, right iliac fossa tenderness, fever 37.3°C, rebound tenderness in RIF and leucocytosis >10000/cubic mm <sup>[9]</sup>. Modified Alvarado Score ≥ 7 is likelihood of acute appendicitis.

<b>COMPONENTS OF MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE</b>		<b>SCORE</b>
<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	Migratory right iliac fossa pain	1
	Nausea/ Vomiting	1
	Anorexia	1
<b>SIGNS</b>	Right iliac fossa(RIF) tenderness	2
	Fever 37.3°C	1
	Rebound tenderness in RIF	1
<b>LABORATORY TEST</b>	Leucocytosis (>10,000/mm <sup>3</sup> )	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>

Table 1: Components of Modified Alvarado Scoring System

#### CRITERIA FOR ACUTE APPENDICITIS BY ULTRASONOGRAPHY (USG)

Ultrasound was done in a standardized protocol involving graded compression, longitudinal and transverse images of the right lower quadrant. The findings suggestive of abnormal appendix was seen as a tubular, blind ending, aperistaltic bowel loop which is non-compressible with a diameter of 7mm or more in the anteroposterior direction. Presence of fecolith or prominence of periappendicular fat is considered as an indirect sign.

#### CRITERIA FOR ACUTE APPENDICITIS BY HISTOPATHOLOGICAL REPORTS (HPE)

Appendicular wall with mucosa ulcerated and transmural acute inflammatory cells infiltration (polymorphous leukocytes) up to serosa with congested blood vessels is suggestive of acute appendicitis. The histopathological reports were used for the final diagnosis of the acute appendicitis.

Statistical analysis of the above data was performed using sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV), negative predictive value (NPV) and diagnostic

accuracy. The analytical data of Modified Alvarado score and ultrasound was compared to find out the most efficient diagnostic modality for acute appendicitis.

**RESULTS:**

A total of 200 patients were selected random for the retrospective study. Number of males was 141(70.5%) which was greater than females 59(29.5%) in the study. The most common age group was 21-30 years (81, 40.5%) who had provisional diagnosis of acute appendicitis.

SEX	INCIDENCE	PERCENTAGE (%)
MALE	141	70.5
FEMALE	59	29.5
TOTAL	200	100

Table 2: Sex distribution in the study population

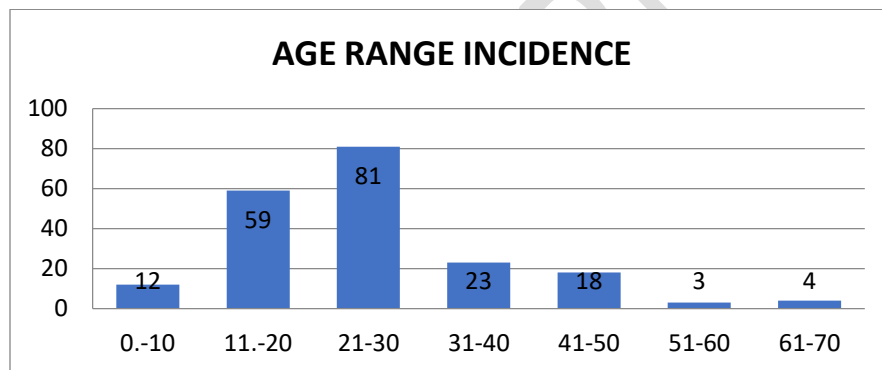


Figure 1: Age distribution in the study population

In the present study, out of the 76 patients with MAS positive (>7 MAS), 8 patients had normal appendix on the HPE reports. The remaining 124 who had a negative Alvarado score (MAS ≤7), 102 had inflamed appendix on the HPE report.

HISTOPATHOLOGICAL FINDING	MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE NEGATIVE ≤7	MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE POSITIVE >7
NO APPENDICITIS	22	8
APPENDICITIS	102	68
TOTAL	124	76

Table 3: Modified Alvarado Score with Histopathological findings

In

analyzing MAS data, the clinical scoring system had a

sensitivity of 89.47%, specificity 73.33%, PPV 40%, NPV 73.33%, false positive error rate of 82.26%, false negative error rate of 10.53% and diagnostic accuracy of 45%.

MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE	PERCENTAGE (%)
SENSITIVITY	89.47
SPECIFICITY	73.33
PPV	40
NPV	73.33
% OF FALSE POSITIVE	82.26
% OF FALSE NEGATIVE	10.53
DIAGNOSTIC ACCURACY	45

Table 4: Analysis of Modified Alvarado Score in diagnosis of Acute Appendicitis

From the table below, we can interrupt that 129 patients diagnosed by USG confirmed to have appendicitis by histopathological reports. 15 patients diagnosed positive by USG found to have normal appendix by HPE reports. 41 patients with negative USG had appendicitis in the HPE reports .The remaining 15 patients had no appendicitis was diagnosed correctly by USG.

HISTOPATHOLOGICAL REPORTS	ULTRASOUND POSITIVE	ULTRASOUND NEGATIVE	TOTAL
APPENDICITIS	129	41	170
NO APPENDICITIS	15	15	30
TOTAL	144	96	200

Table 5: Ultrasound findings with histopathological reports

The sensitivity 89.58%, specificity 15.62%, PPV 75.88%, NPV 50%, false positive error rate of 42.71%, false negative error rate of 10.42% and diagnostic accuracy of 72% for ultrasound to diagnose acute appendicitis.

ULTRASONOGRAPHIC FINDINGS	PERCENTAGE (%)
SENSITIVITY	89.58
SPECIFICITY	15.62
PPV	75.88
NPV	50
% OF FALSE POSITIVE	42.71
% OF FASE NEGATIVE	10.42
DIAGNOSTIC ACCURACY	72

Table 6: Analysis of Ultrasonographic findings in diagnosis of Acute Appendicitis

Comparing the statistical data of Ultrasound and Modified Alvarado score versus the histopathological reports in this study, we can conclude that sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy is higher in USG than MAS.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS	MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE (%)	USG (%)
SENSITIVITY	89.47	89.58
SPECIFICITY	73.33	15.62
DIAGNOSTIC ACCURACY	45	72

Table 7: Correlation of Sensitivity, Specificity and Diagnostic accuracy of Modified Alvarado Score and Ultrasound findings.

## COMPARISON OF STATISTICAL DATA OF ULTRASONOGRAPHY AND MODIFIED ALVARADO SCORE

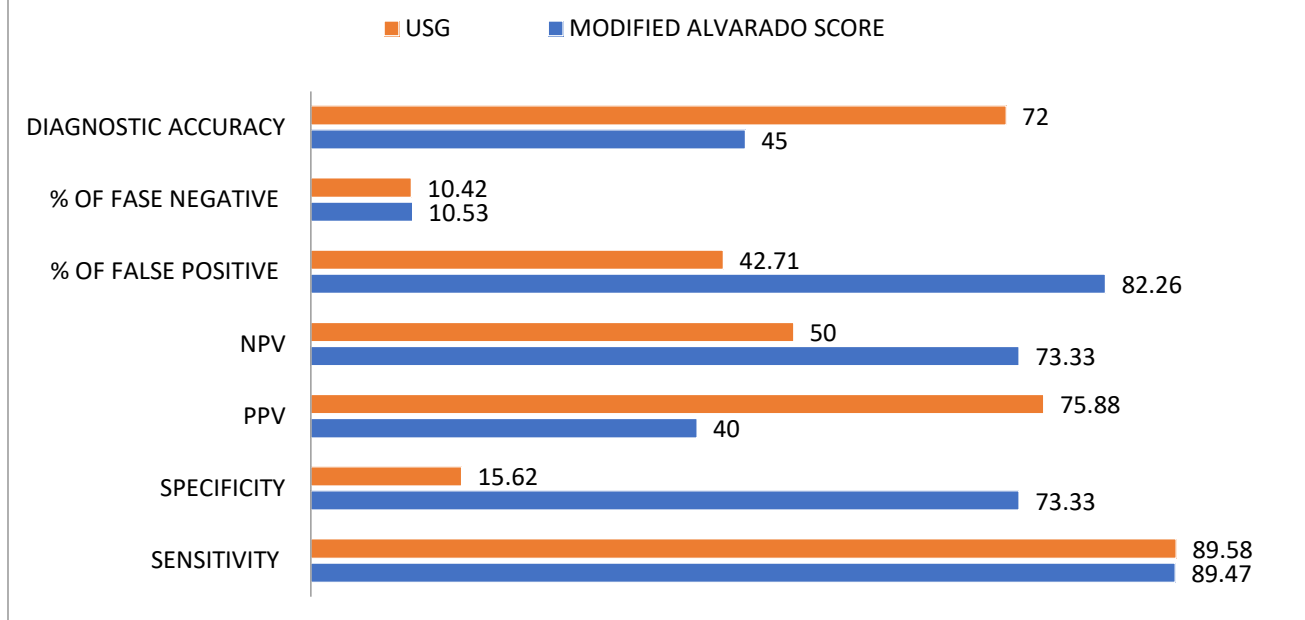


Figure 2: Comparison of Statistical Data of Ultrasonography and Modified Alvarado Score

### HISTOPATHOLOGICAL RESULTS:

Acute appendicitis was confirmed in 170 patients and the remaining 30 has undergone negative appendectomies according to the HPE reports. This resulted in the negative appendectomy rate of 15%.

HISTOPATHOLOGICAL REPORT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
NO APPENDICITIS	27	3	30
APPENDICITIS	114	56	170
TOTAL	141	59	200

Table 8: Sex distribution and Histopathological reports

## **DISCUSSION:**

Acute appendicitis has a high amount of clinical suspicion and results in great uncertainty for the clinician in planning the treatment for the patients. The diagnosis being primarily based on clinical findings, but they can be less severe or difficult to elicit in patients, especially in children and elderly<sup>[16]</sup>. According to some studies, difficulties in decision making in diagnosis has led to 15-30% of negative appendectomy<sup>[5, 17]</sup>. This in turn results in a significant financial burden in the health care system.

In our study, the incidence of acute appendicitis is more common in males (141, 70.5%) than in females (59, 29.5%). The male: female ratio 2.4:1 which is much higher than the results documented by Talukder DB et al.,<sup>[18]</sup> (1.38: 1). The differences may due to the racial, regional and dietary variations.

The study group included people that fall under the age group ranging from 4-65 years of age. The highest incidence of appendicitis was seen among 21-30 years (81, 40.5%) followed by 11-20 years (29.5%). Approximately 70% of the cases recorded belong to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> decade. Studies by Talukder DB et., and Kailash et al.,<sup>[18, 19]</sup> showed 67% incidence among the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> decade individuals.

Clinical scoring systems has played a huge role in the diagnosis of acute appendicitis but most of them are complex and inefficacious in an emergency setting. Modified Alvarado Score has been reported to be a quick and economical diagnostic tool in diagnosis of acute appendicitis in patients of emergency setting<sup>[20]</sup>. In our study, sensitivity and specificity of MAS is 89.47%, 73.33% respectively. Anada Rao et al.,<sup>[21]</sup> documented similar sensitivity and specificity data of 88% and 75% respectively. Diagnostic accuracy of MAS in our study was 45% which was similar to the study done by Kansakar N et al.,<sup>[22]</sup> (43.75%).

On comparing our USG data with other studies, the sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy are 89.58% and 72% respectively. This data is similar to the sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy findings of Singh SK et al.,<sup>[23]</sup> (84.61% and 70.91% respectively). The specificity of USG 15.72% was found to be lower than most of the studies, such as Singh SK et al.,<sup>[23]</sup> (50%) and Shinji Himeno et al.,<sup>[24]</sup> (80%).

The negative appendectomy rate overall in our study was found to be 15% which is in accordance to the acceptable negative appendectomy rate(NAR) which is between 15-25%<sup>[25]</sup>. Though USG has higher diagnostic accuracy than MAS, the need of clinical scoring is needed to complement the diagnosis of acute appendicitis.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The Ultrasonography has higher sensitivity and diagnostic accuracy for predicting acute appendicitis, according to our study. Since it is operator dependant, it is advised that Modified Alvarado Score must be used in addition to USG in diagnosing acute appendicitis. This can be useful in reducing the negative appendectomy and hence reduce the morbidity and mortality.

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