

# Electrotherapy: A novel treatment for 4<sup>th</sup> degree haemorrhoids

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## Introduction

Grade IV haemorrhoids can cause considerable morbidity and can often require surgery, with potentially significant post-operative morbidity, pain and recovery time.

Electrotherapy targets the base of the haemorrhoid pedicle, where low dose direct current is applied. It is an outpatient procedure requiring no pre-procedure preparation and no anaesthetic, and is the subject of NICE guidance as a treatment option for Grades I – III haemorrhoids (June 2015).

This study demonstrates that electrotherapy can be considered as an option in the treatment of grade IV haemorrhoid disease.

## Methods

### Participants

Consecutive patients with grade IV haemorrhoids who underwent treatment with electrotherapy between April 2014 and September 2016 were included in this study.

### Data Collection

Retrospective standardised telephone questionnaire regarding symptoms pre- and post-procedure

### Outcome Measures

- 1) Bleeding severity – assessed with 5-point Likert scale ranging from never [1] to always [5]
- 2) Symptom severity – assessed with 14-point Sodergren severity score
- 3) Presence of any complications

## Results

### Participants

45 patients were treated over the study period  
35 patients completed the telephone questionnaire

### Demographics

20 male  
15 female  
Median age 68 (range 45 – 84)

### Previous treatment for haemorrhoids

19 no previous treatment  
15 had previous treatment (including rubber band ligation, stapled haemorrhoidectomy, HALO, sclerotherapy)  
1 unknown

### Follow-up period

Median time since last treatment 29 months (range 15 – 44)

### Number of treatments

Median 2 treatments (range 1 – 7)

### Complications

3 patients reported pain/discomfort during the procedure  
No complications were reported

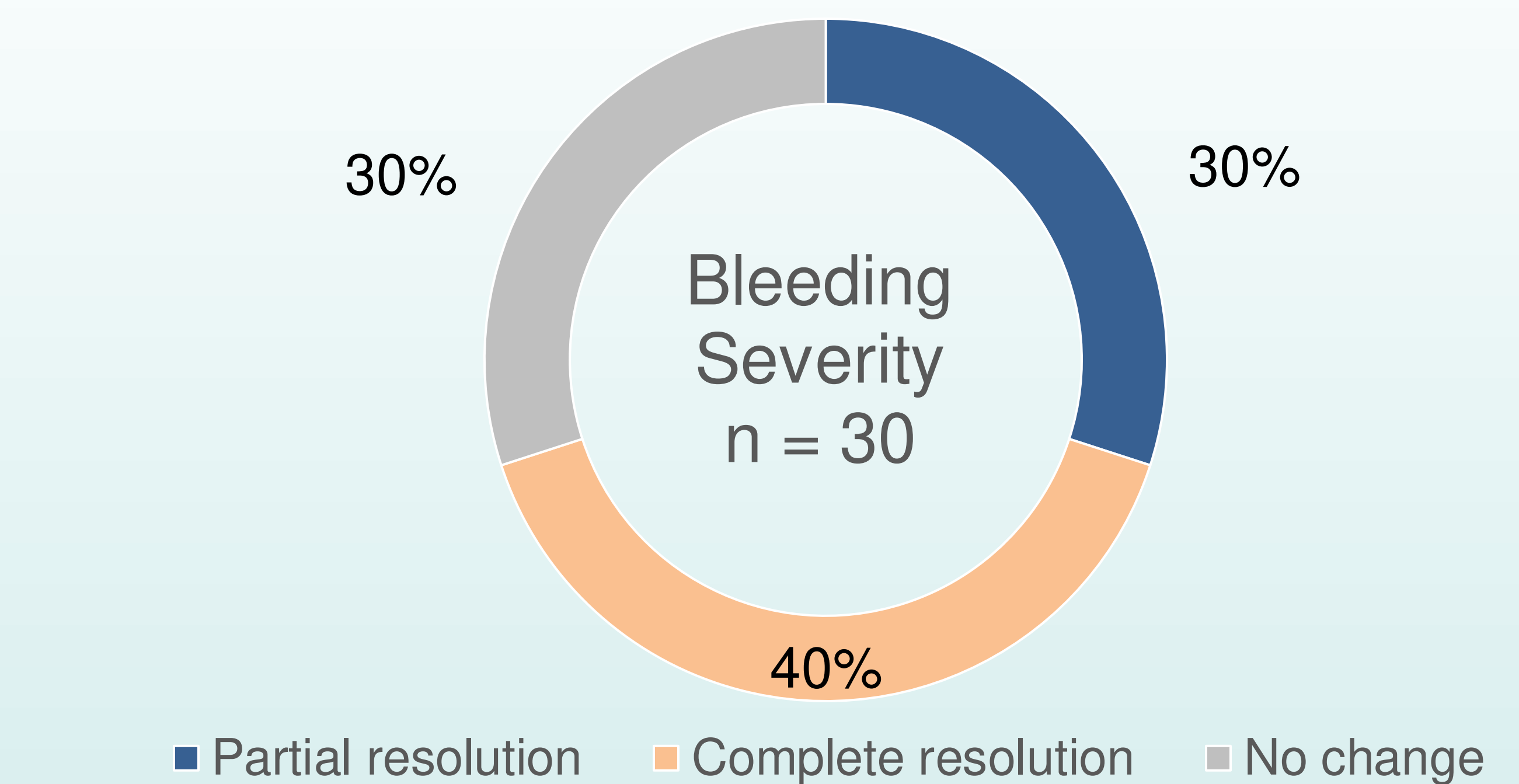


Figure 1. Improvement in bleeding symptoms following electrotherapy

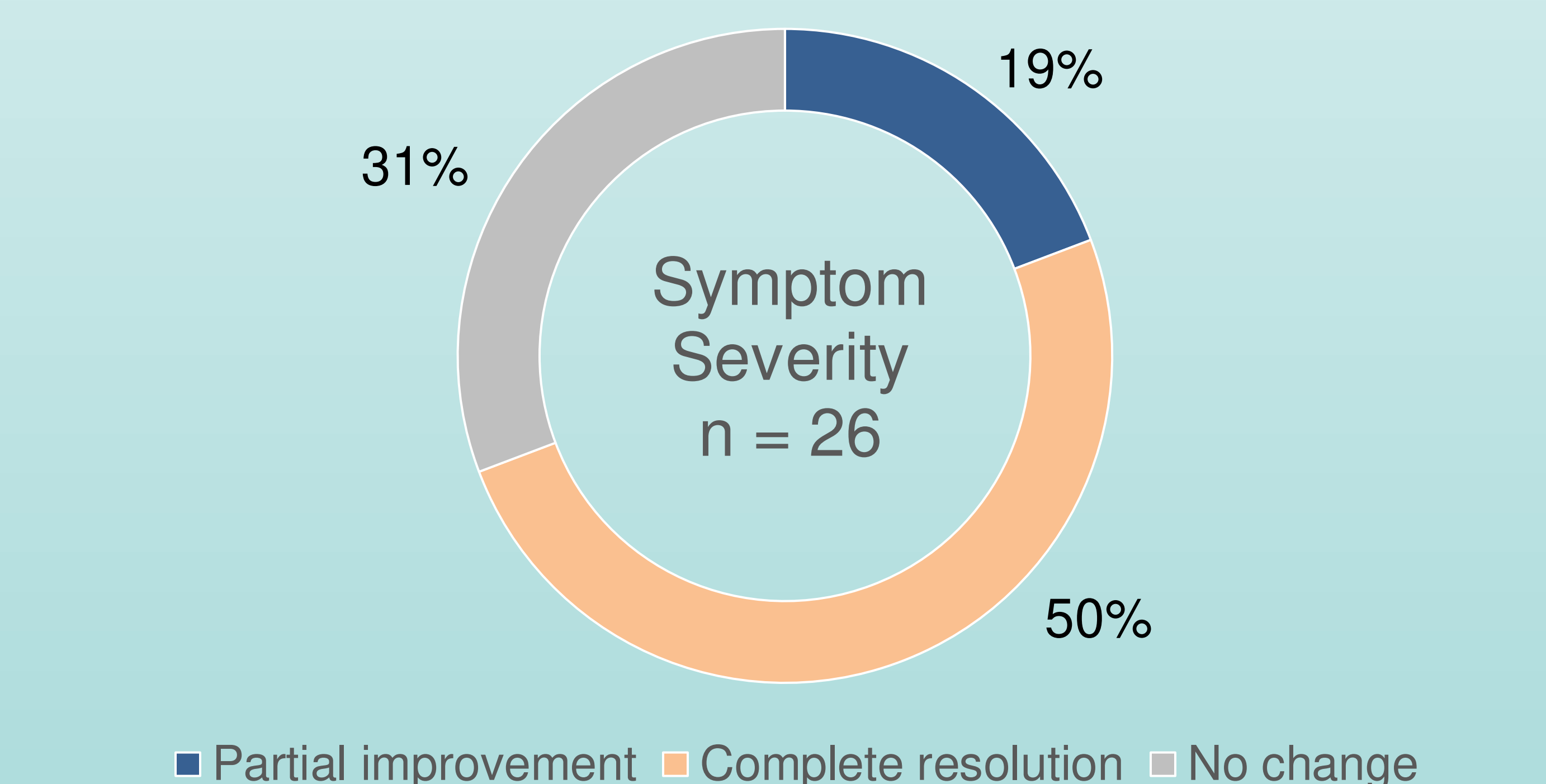


Figure 2. Improvement in symptom severity score following electrotherapy

## Conclusions

In this sample of patients, electrotherapy proved to be a safe and effective treatment for grade IV haemorrhoids

70% of patients reported improvement in bleeding symptoms

69% of patients reported improvement in symptoms severity score

3 patients experienced pain discomfort during the procedure

There were no significant complications reported

Further symptomatic improvement might be expected in those not yet symptom free, with further electrotherapy treatment

## References

1. NICE guidance <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg525>
1. Pucher PH, Qurashi M, Howell A-M. Development and validation of a symptom-based severity score for haemorrhoidal disease: the Sodergren score. *Colorectal Dis.* 2015; 17: 612-618