Prospective randomized study of T-tube versus biliary stent for common bile duct decompression after open choledocotomy

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The T-tube has been the alternative of choice for decompression following common bile duct (CBD) exploration. The development of laparoscopic surgery has suggested using a biliary stent as an alternative to the T-tube following choledochotomy. The purpose of this prospective randomized study was to compare clinical results obtained from patients who underwent open CBD exploration using a biliary stent versus those from patients with a T-tube for decompression. Between September 2000 and June 2002 a total of 81 patients were randomly assigned to a biliary stent or a T-tube as the decompression method following choledochotomy. An open CBD exploration was performed when CBD stones were suspected, in both elective and emergency settings. The length of the postoperative hospital stay was 6.8 ± 4.7 days for patients with the T-tube and of 5.2 ± 3.3 days for, patients with the biliary stent ($p = 0.19$). Postoperative complications were observed in 13 patients (30 %) with the T-tube and in 4 pa