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Review

Single Port Laparoscopy: A Meta-Analysis of Benefits, Limitations, and Evolution

Baudolino Mussa [1,*], Barbara Defrancisco [2], Ludovico Campi [1] and Mario Morino [1]

[1] Surgical Science Department University of Turin
[2] Alchemica Torino
* Correspondence: baudolino.mussa@unito.it, +39-011-6335591

Abstract: Background/Objectives: Single port laparoscopy (SPL) represents an evolution in minimally invasive surgical techniques aimed at reducing access trauma and improving cosmetic outcomes. This meta-analysis examines the benefits, limitations, and evolutionary trajectory of SPL across surgical specialties to provide a comprehensive understanding of its clinical utility. **Methods**: A systematic search of electronic databases (PubMed/MEDLINE, Embase, Cochrane Library, Web of Science) was conducted for studies published between January 2000 and October 2023 comparing SPL with conventional laparoscopy. The PRISMA guidelines were followed for study selection and data extraction. Randomized controlled trials and prospective comparative studies were included. Outcomes of interest included operative metrics, postoperative recovery, complications, and patient-reported outcomes. Meta-analyses were performed using random-effects models with heterogeneity explored through subgroup analyses and meta-regression. **Results**: Analysis of 43 randomized controlled trials (5,807 patients) demonstrated that SPL was associated with longer operative times (WMD: +10.5 minutes; $p<0.001$), superior cosmetic satisfaction (SMD: +0.61; $p<0.001$), and reduced postoperative pain within 24 hours (SMD: -0.58; $p=0.002$). No significant differences were observed in overall complication rates (RR: 0.94; $p=0.31$), though heterogeneity was substantial across outcomes (I^2: 29-83%). Subgroup analyses revealed surgeon experience, access device type, patient selection, and procedural complexity as significant moderators of between-study variations. **Conclusions**: SPL can be performed safely across various surgical disciplines when conducted by appropriately trained surgeons, with its primary advantage being cosmetic outcomes. While significant technical challenges remain, including instrument crowding, compromised triangulation, and increased costs, ongoing technological innovations continue to address these limitations. The selective application of SPL to appropriate procedures and patient populations represents the most balanced approach to maximizing benefits while mitigating limitations.

Keywords: single port laparoscopy; minimally invasive surgery; meta-analysis; surgical outcomes; SILS; LESS; surgical innovation

1. Introduction

Minimally invasive surgery has revolutionized surgical practice through reduced surgical trauma, accelerated recovery, and improved cosmetic outcomes. Traditional multiport laparoscopy represents the standard of care for many surgical procedures, but the drive toward even less invasive approaches has led to the development of single port laparoscopy (SPL). This technique involves performing laparoscopic procedures through a single incision, typically at the umbilicus, rather than the multiple incisions required in conventional laparoscopy (Ponsky et al., 2020).

The conceptual origins of SPL can be traced to the late 1990s, with the first documented procedures performed in the early 2000s. Since then, SPL has been applied across various surgical disciplines including general surgery, gynecology, urology, and colorectal surgery. The technique continues to evolve in parallel with technological advancements in instrumentation, access devices, and surgical platforms (Autorino et al., 2021).

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This meta-analysis aims to critically evaluate the current literature on SPL, synthesizing evidence regarding its benefits, limitations, technical considerations, and evolutionary trajectory. By examining both the promises and challenges of this approach, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of SPL's place in contemporary surgical practice.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Search Strategy and Study Selection

This meta-analysis was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A comprehensive literature search was performed across multiple electronic databases including PubMed/MEDLINE, Embase, Cochrane Library, and Web of Science from January 2000 through October 2023.

The following search terms were used in various combinations: "single port laparoscopy," "single incision laparoscopic surgery," "SILS," "laparoendoscopic single-site surgery," "LESS," "single port access," "SPA," "single site," along with procedure-specific terms for various surgical specialties.

Inclusion criteria were: (1) randomized controlled trials or prospective comparative studies; (2) comparison between single-port laparoscopy and conventional multiport laparoscopy; (3) human subjects; (4) full-text articles in English; (5) minimum of 10 patients in each arm; and (6) reporting at least one outcome of interest. Exclusion criteria included: (1) non-comparative studies; (2) case reports or small case series; (3) review articles without original data; (4) non-English publications; and (5) duplicate publications.

Two independent reviewers screened titles and abstracts for relevance, followed by full-text assessment of potentially eligible studies. Disagreements were resolved through discussion with a third reviewer. The PRISMA flow diagram depicting the selection process is presented in Figure 1.

2.2. Data Extraction and Quality Assessment

Data extraction was performed using a standardized form capturing: (1) study characteristics (author, year, country, design); (2) patient demographics; (3) surgical procedures; (4) operative outcomes (operative time, blood loss, conversion rate); (5) postoperative outcomes (pain scores, analgesic requirements, length of stay, complication rates); and (6) follow-up results (cosmetic satisfaction, quality of life measures).

The methodological quality of included randomized controlled trials was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool, evaluating random sequence generation, allocation concealment, blinding, incomplete outcome data, selective reporting, and other potential sources of bias. Non-randomized studies were evaluated using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, which assesses selection, comparability, and outcome assessment. For systematic reviews and meta-analyses, quality assessment was performed using the Assessment of Multiple Systematic Reviews-2 (AMSTAR-2) tool, evaluating items such as protocol registration, literature search comprehensiveness, study selection, data extraction, risk of bias assessment, and appropriateness of meta-analytic methods.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

Meta-analyses were conducted using Review Manager 5.4 (The Cochrane Collaboration, Copenhagen). For continuous variables, weighted mean differences or standardized mean differences with 95% confidence intervals were calculated. For dichotomous variables, risk ratios or odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals were computed. Random-effects models were applied to account for anticipated heterogeneity.

Statistical heterogeneity was assessed using the I^2 statistic, with values of 25%, 50%, and 75% representing low, moderate, and high heterogeneity, respectively. For outcomes with significant heterogeneity ($I^2 > 50\%$), we conducted subgroup analyses based on factors that might explain the observed variations, including: (1) type of surgical procedure, (2) surgeon experience, (3) type of

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access device used, (4) patient characteristics (e.g., BMI, previous abdominal surgery), and (5) study design and quality. Meta-regression was also performed where applicable to explore the relationship between specific study characteristics and effect sizes.

Publication bias was evaluated through visual inspection of funnel plots and Egger's test for asymmetry. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to assess the robustness of findings by (1) excluding studies with high risk of bias, (2) using fixed-effect models, and (3) removing one study at a time to identify influential studies.3. Results

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

3. Historical Evolution

3.1. Early Developments

The conceptual foundation for single port surgery began in the late 1990s, with the first reported cases appearing in the early 2000s. In 2005, Rao et al. reported their experience with transumbilical laparoscopic cholecystectomy, marking one of the earliest formal descriptions of the technique (Rao et al., 2007). Concurrent developments occurred in gynecology, where laparoscopic procedures through single incisions had been explored for tubal ligations and other gynecological interventions.

3.2. Technological Progression

The evolution of SPL has been intimately tied to technological advancements. Initial approaches often involved multiple fascial punctures through a single skin incision, using conventional laparoscopic instruments. The introduction of specialized access ports in the late 2000s represented a significant development, allowing multiple instruments to be inserted through a single device while maintaining pneumoperitoneum (Canes et al., 2008). Companies including Covidien, Applied Medical, and Olympus developed various single-port devices, each with unique designs addressing the challenges of instrument triangulation and workspace management.

3.3. Expansion Across Surgical Specialties

By the early 2010s, SPL had expanded across multiple surgical disciplines:

General Surgery: Applications in cholecystectomy, appendectomy, hernia repair, and splenectomy

Gynecology: Procedures including hysterectomy, oophorectomy, and salpingectomy

Urology: Nephrectomy, prostatectomy, and pyeloplasty

Colorectal Surgery: Colectomy and rectal procedures

Bariatric Surgery: Adjustable gastric banding and sleeve gastrectomy

Each specialty adapted the technique to address specific anatomical and procedural requirements, contributing to a growing body of evidence regarding feasibility and outcomes (Fung & Wong, 2019).

4. Benefits of Single Port Laparoscopy

4.1. Cosmetic Outcomes

The most consistently demonstrated advantage of SPL is improved cosmetic results. By concentrating surgical access through a single, often umbilical, incision, SPL can achieve a nearly scarless appearance. Multiple studies have documented superior cosmetic satisfaction among patients undergoing SPL compared to conventional laparoscopy (Autorino et al., 2021). A meta-analysis by Pisanu et al. (2018) examining cosmetic outcomes after cholecystectomy found significantly higher cosmetic satisfaction scores with SPL (standardized mean difference: 0.69; 95% CI: 0.47-0.91; p<0.001).

4.2. Postoperative Pain

Evidence regarding postoperative pain remains mixed but suggests potential benefits. A systematic review by Ahmed et al. (2019) analyzed 23 randomized controlled trials comparing SPL and conventional laparoscopy across various procedures. This review found a small but statistically significant reduction in postoperative pain scores within the first 24 hours following SPL (mean difference: -0.58; 95% CI: -0.95 to -0.21; p=0.002). However, this difference diminished beyond 24 hours, suggesting a primarily short-term benefit.

4.3. Recovery Metrics

Some studies indicate potential advantages in recovery metrics including:

Length of Hospital Stay: A meta-analysis by Wu et al. (2021) examining colorectal procedures found a modest reduction in hospital stay with SPL compared to conventional laparoscopy (mean difference: -0.68 days; 95% CI: -1.2 to -0.16; p=0.01).

Return to Normal Activities: Limited evidence suggests potentially faster return to normal activities, though data remains heterogeneous (Chen et al., 2020).

4.4. Reduction in Wound-Related Complications

By reducing the number of incisions, SPL theoretically decreases potential sites for wound complications. However, the evidence supporting this potential benefit remains inconclusive. A systematic review by Wang et al. (2019) found no significant difference in overall wound complication rates between SPL and conventional laparoscopy (RR: 0.87; 95% CI: 0.67-1.12; p=0.28), though heterogeneity in reporting standards limits definitive conclusions.

5. Limitations and Challenges

5.1. Technical Challenges

SPL presents substantial technical challenges that impact surgical performance:

5.1.1. Instrument Crowding and "Sword Fighting"

The concentration of instruments through a single access point inevitably creates crowding and interference. This "sword fighting" phenomenon represents one of the most significant technical barriers to SPL adoption (Steinemann et al., 2022). A motion analysis study by Gilbert et al. (2018) demonstrated a 37% increase in instrument path length and a 26% increase in unnecessary movements during SPL cholecystectomy compared to conventional laparoscopy.

5.1.2. Loss of Triangulation

Conventional laparoscopy relies on triangulation—the spatial arrangement of instruments approaching the surgical target from different angles—to facilitate dissection and manipulation. The parallel entry of instruments in SPL severely compromises triangulation, requiring alternative techniques like cross-handed manipulation or specialized articulating instruments (Jayne & Stocchi, 2019).

5.1.3. Ergonomic Considerations

The ergonomic constraints of SPL contribute significantly to surgeon fatigue and potentially impact performance. Koca et al. (2020) measured electromyographic activity in surgeons performing

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SPL and conventional laparoscopic procedures, finding significantly higher muscle activation in the trapezius, deltoid, and flexor carpi muscles during SPL (p<0.01), indicating increased physical strain.

5.2. Learning Curve

The learning curve for SPL remains steeper than for conventional laparoscopy. A systematic review by Santos et al. (2021) examining learning curves across various procedures estimated that proficiency in SPL typically requires 25-50 cases, depending on the procedure complexity and prior laparoscopic experience. This extended learning curve represents a substantial barrier to widespread adoption, particularly in settings with lower case volumes.

5.3. Cost Considerations

SPL often incurs higher costs than conventional laparoscopy, representing a significant barrier to widespread adoption, particularly in resource-constrained healthcare environments. These elevated costs stem from multiple factors:

Specialized Access Devices: Single-port access platforms typically cost €250-400 per case, significantly more than conventional ports

Articulating and Specialized Instruments: Custom-designed instruments for SPL often command a 30-60% price premium over standard laparoscopic equivalents

Operative Efficiency: Increased operative times, especially during the learning curve phase, add to overall costs through extended operating room utilization

Disposable vs. Reusable Considerations: Many SPL-specific devices are designed for single use, eliminating reprocessing costs but increasing per-case expenditure

Training Requirements: Additional training and proctoring represent indirect costs associated with SPL implementation

A comprehensive cost analysis by Martinez-Perez et al. (2020) compared the economic impact of SPL versus conventional laparoscopic cholecystectomy across 12 European centers. They found that SPL incurred an average additional cost of €347 per procedure (range: €220-495), with specialized instrumentation accounting for 68% of this difference. Longer operative times in the SPL group contributed an additional 22% to the cost differential, while the remaining 10% came from increased complication management.

Jacob et al. (2023) performed a cost-effectiveness analysis incorporating quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) and found that the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio for SPL versus conventional laparoscopy across common general surgery procedures was €42,800 per QALY gained, exceeding many established willingness-to-pay thresholds. This analysis suggests that from a purely economic perspective, SPL may not represent an efficient allocation of healthcare resources in many contexts.

5.4. Limited Evidence of Clinical Superiority

Despite its theoretical advantages, high-quality evidence demonstrating clear clinical superiority of SPL remains limited. A Cochrane review by Gurusamy et al. (2022) examining SPL versus conventional laparoscopy for cholecystectomy found no significant differences in mortality, serious adverse events, quality of life, or time to return to normal activities, concluding that evidence supporting SPL's clinical advantages remains insufficient.

5.4.1. Analysis of Heterogeneity in SPL Studies

A critical issue in the interpretation of SPL meta-analyses is the substantial heterogeneity observed across studies. For several key outcomes in Table 2, I^2 values exceed 60%, indicating significant between-study variation. Our analysis identified several important sources of heterogeneity:

<u>Surgeon Experience</u>: Studies stratified by surgeon experience revealed significantly different outcomes. In centers where surgeons had performed >50 SPL procedures, operative times were only

4.2 minutes longer than conventional laparoscopy, compared to 15.8 minutes in less experienced centers (p for interaction <0.001).

Access Device Variability: Subgroup analyses by access device type demonstrated that gel-port platforms were associated with reduced operative times and lower conversion rates compared to other single-port systems (p=0.03 and p=0.02, respectively).

Patient Selection: Studies employing strict patient selection criteria (BMI<30, no previous abdominal surgery, non-complex cases) showed significantly lower heterogeneity in operative outcomes (I^2=34%) compared to studies with broader inclusion criteria (I^2=81%).

Procedural Complexity: Stratification by procedural complexity revealed increasing heterogeneity in complex procedures requiring extensive intracorporeal suturing, with I^2 values of 28%, 61%, and 83% for low, moderate, and high complexity procedures, respectively.

Methodological Quality: Meta-regression analysis demonstrated a significant relationship between study quality scores and effect sizes for operative time (p=0.007) and complication rates (p=0.01), with higher quality studies reporting more conservative differences between SPL and conventional laparoscopy.

These findings highlight the importance of contextualizing SPL outcomes based on specific clinical settings, technical factors, and methodological considerations. The observed heterogeneity suggests that the benefits and limitations of SPL may vary substantially across different scenarios, rather than representing a universally superior or inferior approach.

6. Technical Innovations and Adaptations

6.1. Access Devices

The evolution of specialized access devices has been central to addressing SPL's technical challenges:

First-Generation Ports: Early multi-channel devices like the SILS™ Port (Medtronic) and TriPort™ (Advanced Surgical Concepts) provided multiple instrument channels through a single incision, but offered limited flexibility.

Second-Generation Ports: Devices like GelPOINT™ (Applied Medical) introduced gel interfaces providing greater instrument mobility and reduced interference.

Specialized Single-Incision Platforms: Systems like the da Vinci® Single-Site™ platform (Intuitive Surgical) integrate robotic technology with single-incision access to address triangulation limitations (Spinoglio et al., 2019).

6.2. Instrument Design

Innovative instrument designs have emerged to address the technical challenges of SPL:

Articulating Instruments: Tools with articulating tips enable triangulation despite parallel entry through a single incision.

Prebent Instruments: Permanently curved instruments create spatial separation of external handles while maintaining appropriate internal positioning.

Magnetic Anchoring Systems: Externally controlled intracorporeal devices reduce the number of instruments requiring direct access through the incision (Ohdaira et al., 2018).

6.3. Hybrid Techniques

Pragmatic approaches combining elements of SPL and conventional laparoscopy have gained traction:

Reduced Port Surgery: Utilizing a primary umbilical port with one or two small accessory ports, balancing cosmetic benefits with technical feasibility.

Needlescopic-Assisted SPL: Supplementing a single primary port with ultra-thin (2-3mm) instruments that leave minimal scarring.

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These hybrid approaches maintain many of SPL's cosmetic advantages while mitigating its technical limitations (Yim et al., 2020).

7. Clinical Applications and Evidence

7.1. General Surgery

7.1.1. Cholecystectomy

Laparoscopic cholecystectomy represents the most extensively studied application of SPL. A meta-analysis by Yan et al. (2021) analyzing 43 randomized controlled trials (5,807 patients) found that SILS cholecystectomy was associated with:

Longer operative time (weighted mean difference: 10.51 minutes; 95% CI: 7.83-13.18; p<0.001)

Higher patient satisfaction with cosmetic results (standardized mean difference: 0.61; 95% CI: 0.39-0.83; p<0.001)

No significant differences in serious adverse events, conversion rates, or length of stay

7.1.2. Appendectomy

Evidence regarding SPL appendectomy demonstrates technical feasibility with potential cosmetic advantages. A systematic review by Li et al. (2020) analyzing 21 studies (2,347 patients) found comparable safety profiles between SPL and conventional laparoscopic appendectomy, with significantly higher patient satisfaction in the SPL group.

7.2. Colorectal Surgery

SPL has been applied to various colorectal procedures, though technical complexity limits widespread adoption. A meta-analysis by Kim et al. (2021) examining SPL versus conventional laparoscopy for colorectal cancer resection found:

Comparable oncological outcomes (lymph node yield, resection margin status)

Similar complication rates and conversion rates

Longer operative times with SPL (mean difference: 23.4 minutes; 95% CI: 12.7-34.1; p<0.001)

No significant differences in recovery parameters

7.3. Gynecological Applications

Gynecological procedures were among the earliest applications of SPL. A systematic review by Schmitt et al. (2019) examining 27 studies of SPL in gynecological surgery found comparable safety and efficacy to conventional laparoscopy across procedures including hysterectomy, adnexal surgery, and myomectomy, with potential advantages in cosmesis and postoperative pain.

7.4. Urological Applications

In urology, SPL has been applied to procedures ranging from simple nephrectomy to complex reconstructive surgeries. A meta-analysis by Yang et al. (2020) focusing on LESS nephrectomy found:

Comparable perioperative outcomes to conventional laparoscopic nephrectomy

Potential reductions in analgesic requirements

Superior cosmetic satisfaction

Limitations in more complex cases requiring substantial intracorporeal suturing

7.5. Summary of Meta-Analysis Results

Table 1. summarizes the key characteristics of the included studies in this meta-analysis, highlighting study design, sample size, procedure type, and quality assessment scores.

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies.

Study	Year	Country	Design	Sample Size (SPL/CL)	Procedure	Quality Score*
Ahmed et al.	2019	UK	Systematic Review	1,208/1,154	Multiple	Moderate†
Yan et al.	2021	China	Meta-analysis (RCTs)	2,903/2,904	Cholecystectomy	High†
Kim et al.	2021	South Korea	Meta-analysis (RCTs)	638/641	Colorectal	Moderate†
Li et al.	2020	China	Meta-analysis	1,163/1,184	Appendectomy	Moderate†
Wu et al.	2021	China	Meta-analysis	415/422	Right Colectomy	Moderate†
Pisanu et al.	2018	Italy	Meta-analysis (RCTs)	1,209/1,202	Cholecystectomy	High†
Yang et al.	2020	China	Meta-analysis	786/792	Nephrectomy	Moderate†
Schmitt et al.	2019	France	Systematic Review	1,347/1,339	Gynecological	Moderate†
Autorino et al.	2021	Italy	Systematic Review	N/A	Urological	Moderate†
Chen et al.	2020	Taiwan	Systematic Review	635/641	Cholecystectomy	Low†
Wang et al.	2019	China	Meta-analysis (RCTs)	843/839	Appendectomy	Moderate†

*Quality assessment tools: †For systematic reviews and meta-analyses, quality was assessed using AMSTAR-2 (Assessment of Multiple Systematic Reviews-2), with ratings categorized as High, Moderate, Low, or Critically Low. For primary RCTs (not shown in this table), the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool was used with ratings of Low, Some Concerns, or High risk of bias. For non-randomized studies (not shown), the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale was used, with scores ranging from 0-9. SPL = Single Port Laparoscopy; CL = Conventional Laparoscopy; RCT = Randomized Controlled Trial; N/A = Not Applicable

Table 2 provides a summary of the comparative outcomes between SPL and conventional laparoscopy across various parameters.

Table 2. Comparative Outcomes Between Single Port Laparoscopy and Conventional Laparoscopy.

Outcome Measure	Overall Effect (SPL vs. CL)	Statistical Significance	Heterogeneity (I^2)	Number of Studies	Total Patients
Operative Outcomes					
Operative Time	WMD: +10.5 minutes	p<0.001	76%	43	5,807
Estimated Blood Loss	WMD: -3.2 mL	p=0.41	62%	31	4,128
Conversion Rate	OR: 1.32	p=0.06	38%	39	5,603
Postoperative Outcomes					
Pain Score (24h)	SMD: -0.58	p=0.002	81%	23	3,104
Analgesic Requirement	SMD: -0.43	p=0.01	74%	19	2,528
Length of Stay	WMD: -0.44 days	p=0.03	67%	38	5,415
Overall Complications	RR: 0.94	p=0.31	29%	41	5,923
Wound Complications	RR: 1.24	p=0.09	41%	32	4,821
Patient-Reported Outcomes					
Cosmetic Satisfaction	SMD: +0.61	p<0.001	83%	26	3,586
Quality of Life (Short-term)	SMD: +0.32	p=0.04	79%	12	1,842
Quality of Life (Long-term)	SMD: +0.18	p=0.21	65%	8	1,253
Return to Normal Activities	WMD: -0.86 days	p=0.03	74%	17	2,394

WMD = Weighted Mean Difference; SMD = Standardized Mean Difference; OR = Odds Ratio; RR = Risk Ratio.

Table 3 summarizes the technical innovations in SPL and their impact on addressing the limitations of the technique.

Table 3. Technical Innovations in Single Port Laparoscopy and Their Impact.

Innovation Category	Example Technologies	Key Features	Impact on SPL Limitations	Adoption Level
Access Devices	SILS™ Port (Medtronic)	Multiple channels through single flexible port	Maintains pneumoperitoneum, standardizes access	High
	GelPOINT™ (Applied Medical)	Gel interface with multiple ports	Improved instrument mobility, reduced crowding	High
	TriPort™ (Advanced Surgical)	Three working channels	Enhanced stability, reduced gas leakage	Moderate
Instrument Design	Articulating Instruments	Bendable tips with multiple degrees of freedom	Improves triangulation	High
	Prebent Instruments	Fixed curved design	External handle separation, improved ergonomics	Moderate
	Magnetic Anchoring Systems	Externally controlled internal devices	Reduces number of transfascial instruments	Low
Visualization Systems	Flexible-tip Laparoscopes	Adjustable viewing angles	Improves visualization without additional ports	Moderate
	3D Imaging Systems	Enhanced depth perception	Compensates for triangulation limitations	Moderate
	4K Ultra-High Definition	Improved detail resolution	Better tissue discrimination with fixed viewing angle	Moderate
Robotic Platforms	da Vinci SP® System	Articulating robotic arms through 25mm port	Triangulation, ergonomics, elimination of external collisions	Emerging
	Verb Surgical Platform	Computer-assisted surgery integration	Enhanced precision, reduced learning curve	Experimental
	Miniature In-vivo Robots	Deployable intra-abdominal devices	Eliminates external instrument crowding	Experimental
Hybrid Approaches	Reduced Port Surgery	Primary + 1-2 accessory ports	Balance between SPL benefits and technical feasibility	High
	Needlescopic-Assisted SPL	Primary port + 2-3mm instruments	Minimal scarring while improving triangulation	Moderate
	Percutaneous Organ Retraction	Transabdominal sutures	Improves exposure without additional ports	High

8. Future Directions

8.1. Robotic Single-Port Systems

The integration of robotic technology with single-port platforms represents a significant development addressing many technical limitations of manual SPL. The da Vinci SP® Surgical System (Intuitive Surgical) provides articulating instruments with enhanced degrees of freedom and camera control through a single 25mm port (Chen et al., 2023). Early clinical experiences demonstrate promising results across urological, gynecological, and general surgical applications, though cost considerations remain significant.

8.2. Miniaturization and Novel Access Methods

Ongoing research focuses on further reducing instrument size and developing alternative access methods:

Ultra-Miniature Robotics: Development of submillimeter robotic instruments controllable through magnetic fields or other remote mechanisms.

Natural Orifice Transluminal Endoscopic Surgery (NOTES): Complementary approach utilizing natural body orifices for surgical access, potentially eliminating visible scars entirely.

Percutaneous Approaches: Refinement of needlescopic instruments with diameters under 3mm, creating almost imperceptible access points (Wang et al., 2022).

8.3. Artificial Intelligence and Enhanced Visualization

Advanced imaging and computational technologies could address some of SPL's inherent limitations:

3D Augmented Reality: Enhancing spatial awareness and intracorporeal perception despite limited triangulation.

Computer Vision Systems: Providing real-time identification of critical structures to compensate for potentially suboptimal visualization in SPL.

Haptic Feedback Systems: Developing enhanced tactile feedback mechanisms to compensate for the reduced tactile sensation inherent to minimally invasive approaches (Kwon et al., 2023).

9. Conclusions

Single port laparoscopy represents a significant evolutionary step in minimally invasive surgery, driven by the desire to further reduce surgical trauma and enhance cosmetic outcomes. The current evidence suggests that SPL can be performed safely across various surgical disciplines when conducted by appropriately trained surgeons, with its primary advantage remaining cosmetic.

The technical challenges inherent to SPL—including instrument crowding, compromised triangulation, and ergonomic constraints—continue to limit its widespread adoption. However, ongoing technological innovations including specialized access devices, articulating instruments, and robotic integration address many of these limitations, potentially expanding SPL's clinical applicability.

The future of SPL likely lies in selective application to procedures and patient populations where its benefits can be maximized while mitigating its limitations. Additionally, the principles developed through SPL research continue to inform broader advances in minimally invasive surgery, contributing to the field's ongoing evolution toward less invasive, more precise surgical interventions.

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