

Latissimus dorsi transfer in massive tear of the rotator cuff

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Chronic massive tear of the rotator cuff associated with atrophy and fatty infiltration of the muscle belly is a surgical challenge, as repair is unattainable in many cases. Even when the cuff can be repaired, recovery of strength and function is far less than satisfactory in many cases. The authors performed transfer of the latissimus dorsi tendon to the greater tuberosity in three cases of chronic massive tear of the posterosuperior rotator cuff with severe degeneration and fatty infiltration of muscle. Every effort was made to repair the cuff to the anatomical neck of humerus, the latissimus dorsi tendon was detached from humeral insertion, rerouted under the acromion and transferred to the posterior aspect of the greater tuberosity as an augmentation procedure. The clinical result in two patients with follow-up over one year was satisfactory in terms of recovery of strength, endurance and function.