

## REVIEW ARTICLE

## Gynecology

# Efficacy, safety, and feasibility of the treatment of intrauterine pathologies with the hysteroscopic morcellator: A systematic review

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## Abstract

**Background:** Hysteroscopy has evolved from a diagnostic to a diagnostic and operative tool, and currently represents the reference standard for both the diagnosis and treatment of intrauterine diseases. In this context, the hysteroscopic morcellator is increasingly gaining popularity because of its simplified approach.

**Objectives:** To evaluate the efficacy, safety, and feasibility of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of intrauterine pathologies.

**Search Strategy:** Electronic databases were searched for English-language trials describing surgical procedures for uterine pathologies performed with the hysteroscopic morcellator until February 1, 2024.

**Selection Criteria:** Retrospective or prospective original studies reporting the treatment of uterine pathologies with the hysteroscopic morcellator were included.

**Data Collection and Analysis:** Data were collected on study features, characteristics of included populations, surgical procedures, complications, and results/outcomes.

**Main Results:** Thirty-nine papers that met the inclusion criteria were included in this systematic review. A descriptive synthesis of the results was provided according to the pathology that was hysteroscopically removed/corrected: endometrial polyps, uterine leiomyomas, and retained products of conception.

**Conclusions:** The hysteroscopic morcellator offers effective and efficient removal of intrauterine lesions, with minimal risk of complications. Despite some limitations identified, such as potential bleeding and the need for additional surgical steps in certain cases, the overall findings support the utility of this technique in clinical practice.

## KEYWORDS

endometrial polyps, fibroids, hysteroscopic surgery, hysteroscopy

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**1 | INTRODUCTION**

In the past, hysteroscopy was considered primarily a diagnostic tool aimed at direct examination of the uterine cavity. Over time, it has evolved into the preferred method for both diagnosis and treatment of various intrauterine pathologies, including polyps, myomas, abnormalities, and post-surgical complications.<sup>1-5</sup> In addition, hysteroscopy has become a commonly used method in preliminary or second-level investigations of infertile patients.<sup>6,7</sup> Advances in hysteroscope design, specifically tailored to the cervical canal, have eased the transition of procedures from the operating room to outpatient settings. This has not only minimized patient discomfort but also enhanced global adoption of the technique. The integration of diagnostic and operative phases has led to the modern "see-and-treat" approach, reducing the need for multiple procedures and enhancing overall patient satisfaction.<sup>8-10</sup>

Currently, within the context of gynecologic endoscopic surgery, there is a wide range of instruments capable of safely, effectively, and swiftly treating nearly all intrauterine pathologies.<sup>11,12</sup> Among these, the hysteroscopic morcellator is increasingly gaining popularity because of its simplified approach, demonstrated by a rapid learning curve, and further reduction in patient discomfort.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, significant technologic advancements have allowed for a progressive reduction in the outer diameter of the morcellator, coupled with an increase in the instrument's effectiveness, taking the technique to an even higher level. All of these enhancements now enable the extraction of intracavitary pathology in a manner that is increasingly painless, fast, and safe, ideally suited for outpatient procedures.

The aim of this systematic review was to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and feasibility of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of intrauterine pathologies.

**2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS****2.1 | Eligibility criteria**

Only original studies (retrospective or prospective) reporting the treatment of uterine and endometrial pathologies using the hysteroscopic morcellator were deemed eligible for inclusion in this systematic review. Studies involving different types of operative hysteroscopy, studies describing only the procedure technique

("step-by-step" procedure description), case report, or case series with fewer than 10 enrolled patients were excluded.

**2.2 | Information sources**

The present study was carried out according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines,<sup>14</sup> available through the Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research (EQUATOR) network, and the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews.<sup>15</sup> It was registered with the international prospective register of systematic reviews (PROSPERO) under the registration number CRD42024509353.

MEDLINE, EMBASE, Global Health, The Cochrane Library (Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, Cochrane Methodology Register), Health Technology Assessment Database, Web of Science, and research register ([ClinicalTrials.gov](http://ClinicalTrials.gov)) were searched for studies describing surgical procedures for uterine and endometrial pathologies using the hysteroscopic morcellator.

**2.3 | Search strategy**

The following medical subject heading (MeSH) and key search terms were used: "Hysteroscopy" (MeSH Unique ID: D015907) OR "Hysteroscopic surgery" (MeSH Unique ID: D015907) OR "Morcellation" (MeSH Unique ID: D000069577) AND "Leiomyoma" (MeSH Unique ID: D007889) OR "Endometrial polyps" (MeSH Unique ID: D011127) OR "Incomplete abortion" (MeSH Unique ID: D000027) OR "Retained placenta" (MeSH Unique ID: D018457) OR "Uterine Synechiae" (MeSH Unique ID: D006175), OR "Isthmocele". We selected papers written in English, from the inception of each database until February 1, 2024.

**2.4 | Study selection**

Titles and/or abstracts of studies retrieved using the search strategy were screened independently by two authors (AE and AD) to identify studies that met the inclusion criteria. The full texts of these potentially eligible articles were retrieved and independently assessed for eligibility by two other review team members (ASL and

VA). A manual search of the references of the included studies was conducted to prevent the omission of pertinent research. Any disagreement between them over the eligibility of articles was resolved through discussion with two other authors (FS and AF). All authors approved the final selection.

## 2.5 | Data extraction

Two authors (VC and SB) independently extracted data from articles about study features, characteristics of included populations, surgical procedures, complications, and results/outcomes using a pre-piloted standard form to ensure consistency. Two authors (CC and LN) reviewed the entire data extraction process.

## 2.6 | Assessment of risk of bias

Two reviewers (EC and AV) assessed independently the risk of bias of studies included in this systematic review using a modified version of the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale.<sup>16</sup> Quality of studies was evaluated in the following five different domains: “study design and sample representativeness”, “sampling technique”, “description of the hysteroscopic technique”, “quality of the population description”, and “incomplete outcome data” (Table S1). Any disagreements between the reviewers were resolved by two other authors (GR and AG).

## 2.7 | Outcomes measures and data synthesis

The primary outcome of this study was to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and feasibility of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of intrauterine pathologies.

- Effectiveness was measured through the rate of successful procedures, as determined by the lack of residual lesion at the end of the procedure and/or at follow-up visit.
- Feasibility was evaluated as the rate of completed procedures in a single surgical step, without any interruptions due to surgical issues or patient's complaint.
- Safety was determined by the rate of intraoperative and postoperative complications.

Quantitative analysis was not possible because of data heterogeneity (including different settings and surgical procedures). We provided a descriptive synthesis of the results in separate sections based on the type of pathology that was removed or corrected: polyps, leiomyomas, and retained products of conception (RPOC).

The body of evidence on the usefulness of the hysteroscopic morcellator for each pathology was assessed by two authors (AD and AE) using Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (OCEBM) 2011 Levels of Evidence.<sup>17</sup>

## 3 | RESULTS

### 3.1 | Study selection

Study selection is displayed in Figure 1. After the evaluation of full texts, a total of 39 papers,<sup>18–56</sup> which met the above-mentioned inclusion criteria, were included in the present systematic review.

### 3.2 | Study characteristics

The main characteristics of the included studies are summarized in Table 1. Fifteen studies were retrospective.<sup>18,20–24,32,34–36,40,43,46,54,55</sup> The other 25 included studies were prospective, including 15 randomized controlled trials (RCTs)<sup>19,25–30,38,39,41,42,47,48,50,52</sup> and nine prospective cohort studies.<sup>31,33,37,44,45,49,51,53,56</sup> Of these, eight studies are from Belgium,<sup>20,23,27,28,39,42,48,51</sup> five from the Netherlands,<sup>18,19,47,52,53</sup> five from the USA,<sup>22,30,33,43,50</sup> four from China,<sup>21,34,54,55</sup> four from Spain,<sup>25,29,44,49</sup> four from Italy,<sup>24,35,40,56</sup> three from the UK,<sup>26,36,46</sup> two from Australia,<sup>31,37</sup> one from Israel,<sup>45</sup> one from Hong Kong,<sup>32</sup> one from Japan,<sup>38</sup> and one from France.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.3 | Risk of bias of included studies

Among the 40 studies included in the present qualitative analysis, 36 were at low risk of bias in three or more domains<sup>18–33,35–45,47,51–55</sup> and three were judged at high risk of bias.<sup>34,46,56</sup> A detailed description of the risk of bias in each domain among studies is reported in Table S2.

### 3.4 | Synthesis of the results

Among the included studies, nine evaluated the use of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of uterine leiomyomas,<sup>24,32,34,37,42,44,50,55</sup> 14 for the treatment of endometrial polyps,<sup>21,22,25–27,29,35,38,40,41,43,47,48,51</sup> seven for both pathologies<sup>18–20,30,31,33,46</sup>, and eight studies assessed the safety of using the morcellator for treating RPOC.<sup>23,28,39,45,49,52,53,56</sup> Finally, two studies evaluated the use of a hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of polyps, leiomyomas, and RPOC together.<sup>36,54</sup> As previously mentioned, we discussed the results separately based on the type of uterine pathology treated in the various included studies. Eight different types of morcellator were used through the included studies, as detailed in Table 2. The level of evidence on the use of hysteroscopic morcellator for each operative procedure is summarized in Table 3.

### 3.5 | Uterine leiomyomas

Nine studies have examined the utility of the hysteroscopic morcellator in the treatment exclusively of uterine leiomyomas.<sup>24,32,34,37,42,44,50,55,57</sup>

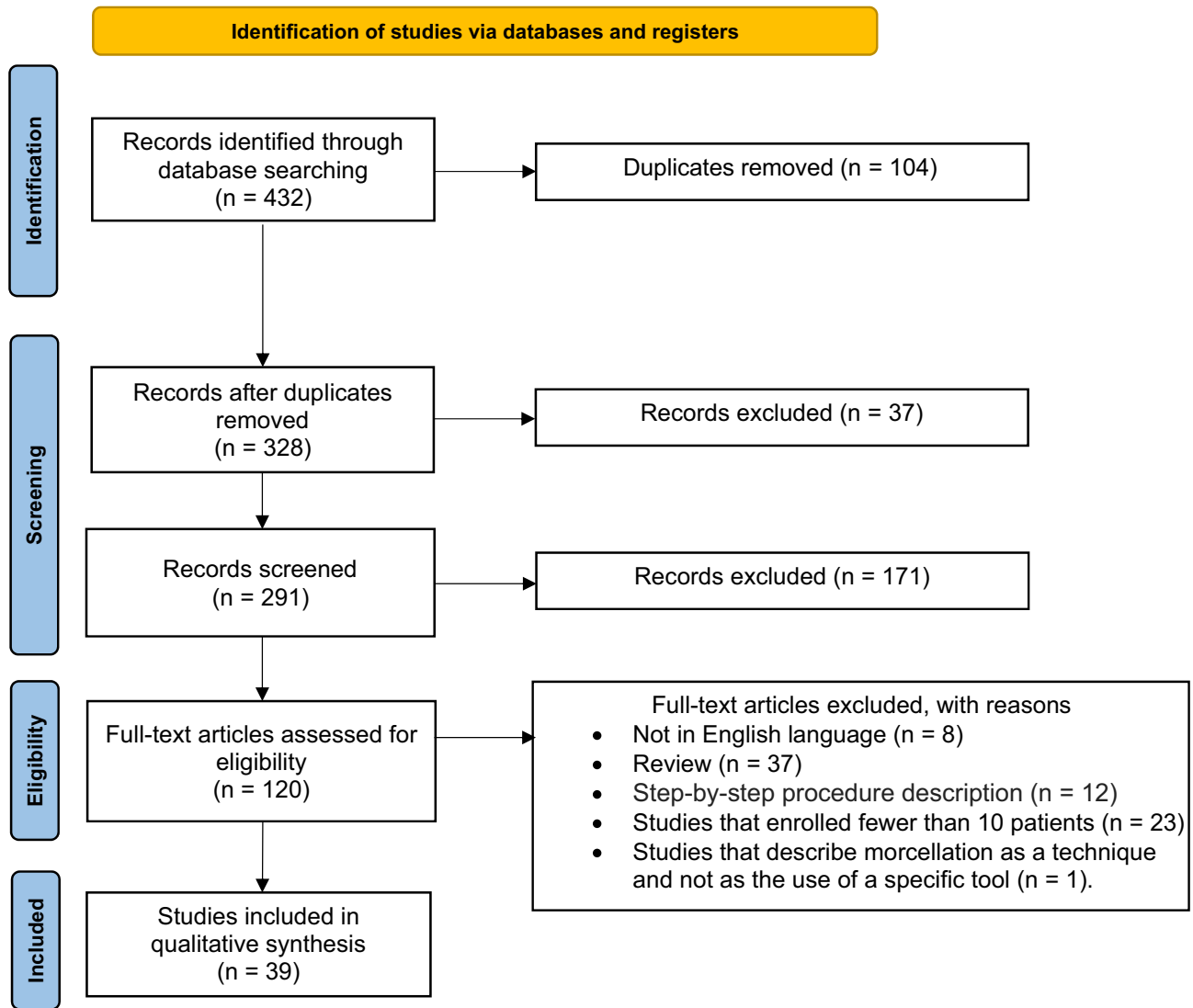


FIGURE 1 PRISMA 2020 Flow diagram of the study. From: Page et al.<sup>14</sup> For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>.

Bigatti et al.<sup>24</sup> compared retrospectively 76 hysteroscopic myomectomies performed with the Integrated Bigatti Shaver® (IBS®, Karl Storz GmbH, Tuttlingen, Germany) with 51 performed using the Versapoint® (currently produced by Olympus, Tokyo, Japan). Patients were divided into groups not only on the basis of the device used (hysteroscopic morcellator and Versapoint®), but also on the basis of the myomas removed (<30mm and >30mm). No difference was found between the two methodologies in terms of cervical dilatation, resection time, and fluid deficit, but, for myomas smaller than 30mm and G2 myomas, the IBS® was able to treat 93.5% ( $P=0.3753$ ) and 62.5% ( $P=0.5491$ ) of cases, respectively, through a single-step procedure, with an overall lower number of second-step surgeries required in the IBS® group than in the Versapoint® group ( $P=0.0067$ ).

Zhang et al.<sup>55</sup> compared the outcomes after hysteroscopic myomectomy with the IBS® using different rotation speeds and aspiration flow rates, finding a recommended rotational speed of 1500 rotations per minute (rpm) and aspiration flow

rate of 500mL/min as the most effective for achieving a complete one-step resection of the myoma. In this study the average size of myomas was  $22.69 \pm 10.995$  mm for group A (rotational speed 2500rpm and aspiration flow rate of 250mL/min) and  $23.68 \pm 9.249$  mm for group B (rotational speed 1500rpm and aspiration flow rate of 500mL/min).

Lee and Matsuzono<sup>32</sup> compared hysteroscopic morcellation (HM) using the MyoSure® (Hologic, Bedford, MA, USA) with conventional monopolar resectoscopic surgery for hysteroscopic myomectomy. The operating time was significantly reduced for HM versus conventional monopolar loop resection (mean 36.6mins vs. 53.6mins;  $P=0.005$ ), with myomas of 3.0 cm or less (mean 27.6 mins vs. 53.4mins;  $P=0.019$ ). Comparable outcomes were achieved through an RCT by Van Wessel et al.<sup>42</sup> using the TruClear™ 8.0 system (previously: Smith & Nephew, Andover, MA, USA; currently: Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN, USA).

Valero et al.<sup>44</sup> compared HM with another minimally invasive approach for the treatment of myomas, using the

TABLE 1 Characteristics of the included studies.<sup>a</sup>

| Author                                | Year | Type                              | Main outcome  | Country     | Patients | Age, years  | Control group  |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|----------|---|--|
| Emanuel et al. <sup>18</sup>          | 2005 | Retrospective comparative         | To compare a new hysteroscopic operating technique with conventional resectoscopy   | Netherlands | 55       | Polyp resection: 51.6 ± 11.7<br>Polyps morcellation: 48.9 ± 11.3<br>Myoma resection: 37.9 ± 6.6<br>Myoma morcellation: 44.6 ± 9.4 | 216 controls treated with conventional transcervical resection   |
| Van Dongen et al. <sup>19</sup>       | 2008 | Randomized Controlled pilot study | To compare conventional resectoscopy and hysteroscopic morcellation among residents in training   | Netherlands | 59       | Morcellator: 49.0 ± 10.9<br>Resectoscopy: 48.2 ± 12.4   | 30 controls treated with conventional resectoscopy   |
| Hamerlynck et al. <sup>20</sup>       | 2011 | Retrospective comparative         | To report the authors' experience with the hysteroscopic morcellator for removal of intrauterine myomas and polyps  | Belgium     | 315      | Myoma: 45 (26–49)<br>Polyp: 47 (23–81)  | None   |
| Yong et al. <sup>21</sup>             | 2021 | Retrospective observational       | To investigate the clinical efficacy of the MyoSure hysteroscopic tissue removal system in the treatment of endometrial and cervical polyps in women with an intact hymen   | China       | 32       | 24.88 ± 6.61  | None   |
| AlHilli et al. <sup>22</sup>          | 2012 | Retrospective comparative         | To compare the long-term outcomes of intrauterine morcellation of endometrial polyps versus a traditional operative polypectomy technique, hysteroscopic resection, and to identify factors predictive of recurrent abnormal uterine bleeding after operative polypectomy | USA         | 311      | Hysteroscopic resection: 53.9 ± 12.3<br>Hysteroscopic morcellation: 55.4 ± 11.4   | 172 controls treated with hysteroscopic resection  |
| Hamerlynck et al. <sup>23</sup>       | 2013 | Retrospective observational       | To evaluate the authors' initial experience with hysteroscopic morcellation for removal of placental remnants   | Belgium     | 105      | 33.5 ± 4.2  | None   |
| Bigatti et al. <sup>24</sup>          | 2014 | Retrospective comparative         | To compare 76 myomectomies performed with the IBS® with 51 with the Versapoint® to evaluate whether this new technique offers real advantages   | Italy       | 127      | IBS group: 47.3 ± 10.1<br>Versapoint group: 48.04 ± 11.4  | 51 patients treated with bipolar hysteroscopic myomectomy  |
| Rovira Pampalona et al. <sup>25</sup> | 2014 | Randomized controlled trial       | To assess and compare efficacy, pain, and the learning curve associated with diagnostic therapeutic hysteroscopy using mechanical tissue removal versus bipolar electrical resection in the management of endometrial polyps in an ambulatory care setting                | Spain       | 133      | Truclear: 55 (SD n.a.)<br>Versapoint: 52 (SD n.a.)  | 133 patients diagnosed with endometrial polyp(s) randomly assigned to 1 of the 2 hysteroscopic methods |
| Smith et al. <sup>26</sup>            | 2014 | Randomized controlled trial       | To evaluate whether hysteroscopic morcellation or bipolar electrocautery resection is more favorable for removing endometrial polyps in an office setting   | UK          | 121      | Hysteroscopic morcellation: 54.3 ± 12.7<br>Electrical resection: 54.9 ± 14.2  | 121 women randomly allocated to polyp removal by one of the two methods in an office setting           |

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

| Author                                | Year | Type                        | Main outcome  | Country   | Patients | Age, years   | Control group   |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|---|-----------|----------|--|---|
| Hamerlynck et al. <sup>27</sup>       | 2015 | Randomized controlled trial | To compare hysteroscopic morcellation with bipolar resectoscopy for removal of endometrial polyps, in terms of procedure time, peri- and postoperative adverse events, tissue availability, and short-term effectiveness                  | Belgium   | 84       | Hysteroscopic morcellation: 50 ± 10<br>Resectoscopy: 51 ± 12   | 84 women randomized in the hysteroscopic morcellation and resectoscopy group  |
| Hamerlynck et al. <sup>28</sup>       | 2016 | Randomized controlled trial | To compare hysteroscopic morcellation with loop resection for the removal of placental remnants in terms of procedure time, adverse events, tissue availability, histology results, short-term effectiveness, and postoperative adhesions | Belgium   | 86       | Hysteroscopic morcellation: 32 ± 6<br>Resectoscopy: 31 ± 4     | 40 controls randomly selected undergoing conventional resectoscopic technique   |
| Rovira Pampalona et al. <sup>29</sup> | 2015 | Randomized controlled trial | To assess the total duration of hysterectomy and polypectomy performed in an outpatient setting comparing the new mechanical energy hysterectomy to the bipolar energy system   | Spain     | 90       | Versapoint: 58.9 (54.11–63.82)<br>Truclear: 49.4 (45.69–53.17) | 90 patients randomly assigned to 4 groups, Truclear, Versapoint, Truclear with residents, and Versapoint with residents |
| Rubino et al. <sup>30</sup>           | 2014 | Randomized controlled trial | To examine efficacy of hysteroscopic removal of polyps and myomas on health-related quality of life and symptom severity at 1-year postprocedure  | USA       | 118      | Office: 41.2 ± 7.0<br>Ambulatory surgery center: 41.7 ± 7.1    | Patients randomized to undergo hysteroscopic morcellation in an office setting or in an ambulatory surgery center       |
| Arnold et al. <sup>31</sup>           | 2016 | Prospective cohort          | To determine the effectiveness of the MyoSure® intrauterine mechanical morcellator device for removal of intrauterine pathology   | Australia | 255      | 44 (22–82)   | None  |
| Lee et al. <sup>32</sup>              | 2016 | Retrospective observational | To determine the safety, satisfaction, and efficiency of hysteroscopic intrauterine morcellation of submucosal fibroids, and to compare this technique with conventional hysteroscopic monopolar loop resection                           | Hong Kong | 29       | n.d.   | None  |
| Scheiber et al. <sup>33</sup>         | 2016 | Prospective observational   | To explore the feasibility of hysteroscopic morcellation across a diverse set of facilities, including both surgical and office-based settings  | USA       | 278      | 43.9 ± 9.0   | None  |
| Liang et al. <sup>34</sup>            | 2017 | Retrospective observational | To determine whether clinical evaluation of improved MyoSure hysteroscopic tissue removal system can remove type II submucosal myomas with safety and high success rate of the first operation  | China     | 53       | 35.06 ± 12.72  | None  |
| Ceci et al. <sup>35</sup>             | 2018 | Retrospective observational | To evaluate feasibility, effectiveness and patient acceptability of a small-diameter hysteroscopic tissue removal system in the treatment of large endometrial polyps (≥20 mm)  | Italy     | 146      | 52.1 ± 12.05   | None  |

TABLE 1 (Continued)

| Author                              | Year | Type                        | Main outcome   | Country   | Patients | Age, years  | Control group  |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|--|-----------|----------|---|--|
| Georgiou et al. <sup>36</sup>       | 2018 | Retrospective cohort        | To elucidate the hysteroscopic tissue removal system (MyoSure) efficacy and safety among uterine cavity pathologies, and to determine its feasibility in an outpatient setting                             | UK        | 124      | 51.16 (24–81)   | None   |
| Maheux-Lacroix et al. <sup>37</sup> | 2017 | Prospective cohort          | To assess the long-term efficacy of hysteroscopic morcellation of submucosal leiomyomas in women with abnormal uterine bleeding  | Australia | 73       | 43 ± 9  | None   |
| Tsuchiya et al. <sup>38</sup>       | 2018 | Randomized controlled trial | To evaluate the TruClear™ system in terms of the operating time, surgeon's convenience, and effect on patients compared with conventional electroresection   | Japan     | 67       | Morcellation: 37.5 ± 6.1<br>Electrosurgical resection: 39.2 ± 5.9           | 67 patients randomly allocated to undergo hysteroscopic morcellation or electroresection                       |
| van Wessel et al. <sup>39</sup>     | 2019 | Randomized controlled trial | To evaluate the reproductive outcomes in women treated for retained products of conception by hysteroscopy (morcellation versus loop resection)  | Belgium   | 86       | Morcellation: 32 (28–38)<br>Loop resection: 34 (27–37)                      | None   |
| Ceci et al. <sup>40</sup>           | 2020 | Retrospective comparative   | To compare the recurrence of benign endometrial polyps after office hysteroscopic polypectomy performed with a bipolar electrode or a small-diameter hysteroscopic tissue removal system                   | Italy     | 90       | Bipolar electrode: 41.4 ± 5.7<br>Hysteroscopic tissue removal: 40.8 ± 5.7   | 48 controls undergoing hysteroscopic polypectomy with bipolar electrode  |
| Stoll et al. <sup>41</sup>          | 2020 | Randomized controlled trial | To compare a reusable hysteroscopic morcellator and standard resectoscopes in the hysteroscopic management of uterine polyps   | France    | 90       | 54.5 ± 11.3   | 90 patients were randomized, 45 in the hysteroscopic morcellation group and 45 in the standard resection group |
| Van Wessel et al. <sup>42</sup>     | 2021 | Randomized controlled trial | To compare hysteroscopic morcellation with bipolar resection for the removal of submucous type 0 and 1 myomas  | Belgium   | 83       | Hysteroscopic morcellation: 45 ± 7<br>Resectoscopy: 44 ± 8                  | 83 patients randomized to hysteroscopic morcellation with the TruClear™ or to bipolar resection                |
| Kavoussi et al. <sup>43</sup>       | 2021 | Retrospective observational | To determine if hysteroscopic morcellation of endometrial polyps affects implantation rate, clinical pregnancy rate, spontaneous abortion rate, and live birth rate in first frozen embryo transfer cycles | USA       | 135      | Group A: 35.40 ± 3.10<br>Group B: 35.08 ± 4.25                              | Group B: no hysteroscopic polypectomy before first frozen embryo transfer (n = 110)                            |
| Valero et al. <sup>44</sup>         | 2021 | Prospective observational   | To compare the results of hysteroscopic myomectomy when using whether the mini-resectoscope or the MyoSure morcellator   | Spain     | 80       | Mini-resectoscope: 45.77 ± 6.57<br>Hysteroscopic morcellation: 44.47 ± 6.47 | 40 patients undergoing polypectomy with mini-resectoscope  |
| Weinberg et al. <sup>45</sup>       | 2021 | Prospective pilot study     | To evaluate initial feasibility and experience with guided hysteroscopic morcellation for uterine evacuation of early miscarriage.   | Israel    | 10       | 34.4 ± 7.2  | None   |

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

| Author                               | Year | Type                        | Main outcome   | Country     | Patients | Age, years  | Control group   |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|----------|---|---|
| Bhagat et al. <sup>46</sup>          | 2022 | Retrospective observational | To evaluate the safety and efficacy of hysteroscopic morcellation of endometrial polyps and submucosal fibroids in an outpatient setting   | UK          | 249      | 54 (31–83)  | None  |
| Van Gemert et al. <sup>47</sup>      | 2022 | Randomized controlled trial | To evaluate the effectiveness of the electro-surgical polyp snare in comparison with a tissue removal device   | Netherlands | 66       | Electrosurgical snare: 59.7 ± 10.0<br>Hysteroscopic morcellation: 56.2 ± 14.5                       | 66 patients randomly allocated to treatment with electro-surgical polyp snare or hysteroscopic morcellation               |
| Van Wessel et al. <sup>48</sup>      | 2022 | Randomized controlled trial | To compare manual with electromechanical morcellation for hysteroscopic polypectomy  | Belgium     | 140      | Manual Hysteroscopic morcellation: 53.0 ± 13.0<br>Automatic Hysteroscopic morcellation: 51.0 ± 11.0 | 140 patients randomly assigned to manual or electromechanical morcellation  |
| Bailón Queiruga et al. <sup>49</sup> | 2023 | Prospective observational   | To assess effectiveness, safety and patient satisfaction of hysteroscopic removal of retained products of conception using a tissue removal system in the outpatient setting   | Spain       | 52       | 31.2 ± 7.3  | None  |
| Tam et al. <sup>50</sup>             | 2023 | Randomized clinical trial   | To evaluate the quality of life in patients treated for submucosal leiomyomas after hysteroscopic myomectomy compared to medical therapy   | USA         | 69       | Medical treatment: 39.9 ± 8.5<br>Hysteroscopy: 44.1 ± 5.7   | 69 patients randomized to oral contraceptive pills/progesterone-releasing intrauterine device or hysteroscopic myomectomy |
| Van Wessel et al. <sup>51</sup>      | 2023 | Prospective cohort          | A first clinical evaluation of a new hand-driven hysteroscopic tissue removal device, Resectr™ 5fr, for office polypectomy without any anesthesia  | Belgium     | 102      | 51 ± 13   | None  |
| Wagenaar et al. <sup>52</sup>        | 2023 | Randomized clinical trial   | To study the comparison between hysteroscopic morcellation of retained products of conception with ultrasound-guided electric vacuum aspiration in terms of intrauterine adhesion formation, efficacy, and complications   | Netherlands | 133      | n.d.  | 133 women randomized to receive either hysteroscopic morcellation or electric vacuum aspiration                           |
| Wagenaar et al. <sup>53</sup>        | 2023 | Prospective cohort          | To compare intrauterine adhesion formation after hysteroscopic morcellation of retained products of conception with intrauterine adhesion formation after ultrasound-guided electric vacuum aspiration and externally validate the outcomes of a randomized controlled trial | Netherlands | 178      | Hysteroscopic morcellation: 32 ± 4.0<br>Electric vacuum aspiration: 32 ± 3.9                        | 28 patients treated with electric vacuum aspiration   |

TABLE 1 (Continued)

| Author                       | Year | Type                      | Main outcome  | Country | Patients | Age, years   | Control group  |
|------------------------------|------|---------------------------|---|---------|----------|--|--|
| Yong et al. <sup>54</sup>    | 2023 | Retrospective comparative | To compare and analyze the clinical efficacy and reproductive outcomes of the hysteroscopic tissue removal system (MyoSure) and hysteroscopic electroresection in the treatment of benign intrauterine lesions in women of reproductive age | China   | 1879     | Myosure group<br>Submucous leiomyomas:<br>33.79 ± 5.96<br>Endometrial polyps:<br>31.53 ± 7.01<br>Retained products of<br>conception:<br>29.63 ± 3.88<br>Electroresection group<br>Submucous leiomyomas:<br>34.89 ± 4.20<br>Endometrial polyps:<br>33.37 ± 6.51<br>Retained products of<br>conception: 29.99 ± 4.09 | 1133 patients who underwent<br>hysteroscopic electroresection  |
| Zhang et al. <sup>55</sup>   | 2023 | Retrospective comparative | To evaluate whether the Intrauterine IBS® instrument settings and the myoma size and type are prognostic factors for the complete removal of submucous myomas using this technology   | China   | 191      | Group A: 48.77 ± 9.85<br>Group B: 45.51 ± 8.77   | Patients undergoing<br>hysteroscopic myomectomy with<br>hysteroscopic morcellation with<br>two different rotational speeds<br>and aspiration flow rate |
| Damiani et al. <sup>56</sup> | 2023 | Prospective observational | To assess the hysteroscopic morcellation as a surgical-therapeutic approach in the treatment of retained products of conception   | Italy   | 22       | 34.0 (27.0–41.0)   | None   |

Abbreviations: n.d., not determined; SD (n.a.), standard deviation not available.

Data are presented as number for Patients and as mean ± standard deviation or median (range) for Age (in years).

TABLE 2 Characteristics of hysteroscopic morcellators used in the included studies.

| Size and name                    | Composition of the instrument  | Rotation force  | Rotations per minute | Company  | Authors  |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| TruClear™ 8.0                    | 4.5-mm inner instrument introduced through the straight working channel of a continuous flow 9-mm rigid endoscope                  | Electromechanic | 750                  | Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN, USA<br>Developed by Smith & Nephew Endoscopy, Andover, MA, USA | Emanuel et al. <sup>18</sup><br>Van Dongen et al. <sup>19</sup><br>Hamerlynck et al. 2011 <sup>20</sup><br>AlHilli et al. <sup>22</sup><br>Hamerlynck et al. <sup>23</sup><br>Hamerlyck et al. <sup>27</sup><br>Hamerlynck et al. <sup>28</sup><br>Tsuchiya et al. <sup>38</sup><br>Wagenaar et al. <sup>52</sup><br>Wagenaar et al. <sup>53</sup> |
| TruClear™ Elite                  | 6.25- or 7.25-mm outer sheath, 3 mm working channel. 201.1 mm working length.  | Electromechanic |                      | Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN, USA<br>Developed by Smith & Nephew Endoscopy, Andover, MA, USA | Weinberg et al. <sup>45</sup><br>Wagenaar et al. <sup>52</sup>   |
| MyoSure™ Lite                    | 2.5-mm inner blade, 3-mm outer tube, outer sheath 6.25-mm cutting window length of 10.2 mm and depth of 1.5 mm                     | Electromechanic | 6000                 | Hologic, Marlborough, MA, USA  | Yong et al. <sup>21</sup><br>Arnold et al. <sup>31</sup><br>Lee et al. <sup>32</sup><br>Scheiber et al. <sup>33</sup><br>Georgiou et al. <sup>36</sup><br>Maheux-Lacroix et al. <sup>37</sup><br>Valero et al. <sup>44</sup><br>Bhagat et al. <sup>46</sup><br>Yong et al. <sup>54</sup>   |
| MyoSure™ XL                      | 2.5-mm inner blade, 3-mm outer tube, outer sheath 7.25-mm cutting window length of 14 mm and depth of 2.4 mm                       | Electromechanic | 8075                 | Hologic, Marlborough, MA, USA  | Arnold et al. <sup>31</sup><br>Liang et al. <sup>34</sup><br>Georgiou et al. <sup>36</sup><br>Maheux-Lacroix et al. <sup>37</sup><br>Bhagat et al. <sup>46</sup>   |
| Integrated Bigatti Shaver (IBS®) | Two hollow reusable metal tubes fitting into each other. Diameter of the outer sheath 8 mm (24 Fr)                                 | Electromechanic | 5000                 | Karl Storz GmbH, Tuttlingen, Germany   | Bigatti et al. <sup>24</sup><br>Wagenaar et al. <sup>53</sup><br>Zhang et al. <sup>55</sup>  |
| TruClear™ 5.0                    | 5-mm hysteroscope with a 0° angle and a 5.6-mm sheath equipped with a 2.9-mm-diameter tissue removal device in the working channel | Electromechanic |                      | Medtronic, Minneapolis, MN, USA<br>Developed by Smith & Nephew Endoscopy, Andover, MA, USA | Rovira Pampalona et al. <sup>25</sup><br>Smith et al. <sup>26</sup><br>Rovira Pampalona et al. <sup>29</sup><br>Ceci et al. <sup>35</sup><br>Kavoussi et al. <sup>43</sup><br>Van Gemert et al. <sup>47</sup><br>Queiruga et al. <sup>49</sup><br>Tam et al. <sup>50</sup>   |
| Resectr™ 9 Fr                    | 3-mm (9-Fr) instrument diameter, cutting window 7.5 mm   | Manual          | Dependent on surgeon | Minerva Surgical, Inc. Santa Clara, CA, USA  | Van Wessel et al. <sup>48</sup>  |
| Resectr™ 5 Fr                    | 1.66-mm (5-Fr) instrument diameter, cutting window 5 mm inserted into the operative channel of a diagnostic hysteroscope <5 mm     | Manual          | Dependent on surgeon | Minerva Surgical, Inc. Santa Clara, CA, USA  | Van Wessel et al. <sup>51</sup>  |

**TABLE 3** Levels of evidence according to Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (OCEBM) 2011.<sup>a</sup>

| Clinical condition                     | OCEBM level of evidence (2011) <sup>17</sup> |
|--|--|
| Uterine leiomyomas                     | Level 2                                      |
| Endometrial polyps                     | Level 2                                      |
| Retained products of conception (RPOC) | Level 2                                      |

<sup>a</sup>Level 2 evidence refers to moderate-quality evidence derived from well-designed cohort studies or diagnostic studies with consistently applied reference standards, according to the Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine – 2011 Levels of Evidence.<sup>17</sup>

mini-resectoscope. No statistically significant differences between groups were found except for a shorter entrance time for the mini-resectoscope.

The safety and effectiveness of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of submucous fibroids was corroborated also by Maheux-Lacroix et al.<sup>37</sup> and by Liang et al.<sup>34</sup> in two prospective observational studies, with analogous findings. The size of the treated myomas was again similar to previous studies:  $33 \pm 13$  mm<sup>37</sup> and  $3.88 \pm 1.39$  cm.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Tam and Juarez<sup>50</sup> conducted an RCT evaluating the quality of life of 69 patients previously randomized to undergo HM or medical therapy of symptomatic fibroids. Despite no statistically significant difference in overall quality of life, significant improvements were noted in health-related quality of life scores post-surgery.

## Quality of evidence

The evidence regarding the safety, effectiveness, and reliability of employing the hysteroscopic morcellator for the surgical excision of uterine leiomyomas has been classified as evidence level 2.

### 3.6 | Endometrial polyps

Fourteen studies examined the efficacy of the hysteroscopic morcellator in managing endometrial polyps.<sup>21,22,25–27,29,35,38,40,41,43,47,48,51</sup>

Of these, five compared HM with traditional hysteroscopic resection technique.<sup>22,26,27,38,41</sup>

AlHilli et al.<sup>22</sup> compared the long-term outcomes of endometrial polypectomy with hysteroscopic morcellator compared with the traditional hysteroscopic resection technique, finding a lower recurrence rate after HM. Furthermore, morcellation demonstrated significantly faster procedures, less discomfort, higher acceptability among women, and greater complete removal rate of endometrial polyps when compared with electrosurgical resection in the RCT conducted by Smith et al.<sup>26</sup> Equal outcomes were found in three other RCTs, respectively by Hamerlynck et al.<sup>27</sup> Stoll et al.<sup>41</sup> and Tsuchiya et al.<sup>38</sup>

Ceci et al.<sup>40</sup> evaluated the 1-year follow-up outcomes in 48 women treated by bipolar electrode and 42 women undergoing HM. No

difference was found in terms of complete removal and recurrence of polyps. Nevertheless, HM was associated with a lower surgical pain and time of procedure compared with bipolar electrode. Comparable findings were found by Rovira Pampalona et al.<sup>25,29</sup> in two distinct RCTs.

Hysteroscopic morcellation of endometrial and cervical polyps with the MyoSure® was safe and effective in women with an intact hymen, as shown by a retrospective study by Yong et al.<sup>21</sup> Parallel results were obtained by Ceci et al.<sup>35</sup> in a retrospective evaluation of large endometrial polyps ( $\geq 20$  mm) treated with Truclear™ 5C.

Kavoussi et al.<sup>43</sup> evaluated the in vitro fertilization (IVF) outcomes after the first frozen embryo transfer following endometrial polypectomy with Truclear™ 5.0 in infertile women, showing no adverse effects on implantation rate (IR), clinical pregnancy rate (CPR), miscarriage rate, and live birth rate when compared with women who did not undergo hysteroscopic polypectomy because they had no polyps diagnosed before a first frozen embryo transfer.

Van Gemert et al.<sup>47</sup> compared HM with endometrial polypectomy using the electrosurgical polyp snare in an RCT including 66 women with an endometrial polyp. A higher rate of complete polyp resection, and higher overall safety and patient satisfaction were found among the HM group.

Finally, van Wessel et al.<sup>48</sup> demonstrated the non-inferiority of a new hand-driven hysteroscopic morcellator (Resectr™ 9Fr) compared with conventional electromechanical HM (TruClear™) for hysteroscopic polypectomy in terms of mean instrumentation set-up time and total procedure time, whereas findings regarding the duration of resection were unclear. The same group recently assessed the feasibility of HM with a further miniaturized version of the same instrument, Resectr™ 5Fr, in a first clinical evaluation of 102 women with endometrial polyps.<sup>51</sup>

## Quality of evidence

We found adequate quality evidence (level 2) supporting the effectiveness, feasibility, and safety of using the hysteroscopic morcellator for outpatient endometrial polypectomy.

### 3.7 | Endometrial polyps and leiomyomas

Thirty studies evaluated the use of the hysteroscopic morcellator for the treatment of endometrial polyps and uterine leiomyomas, including 12 RCTs,<sup>19,25–27,29,30,38,41,42,47,48,50</sup> five prospective<sup>31,33,37,44,51</sup> and 12 retrospective studies.<sup>18,20–22,24,32,34,35,40,43,46,55</sup>

Seven studies among the above-mentioned analyzed the HM efficacy in the treatment of both endometrial polyps and uterine leiomyomas.<sup>18–20,30,31,33,46</sup>

A first analysis regarding the treatment of both pathologies with HM came from Emanuel and Wamsteker.<sup>18</sup> Fifty-five women, of whom 27 had endometrial polyps and 28 had submucous myomas, were treated with the Intra Uterine Morcellator prototype (originally developed by Smith & Nephew Endoscopy, Andover, MA, USA) and conventional

resectoscopy. The HM technique demonstrated a faster operating time in the management of both pathologies. Similar results were obtained subsequently in an RCT by van Dongen et al.<sup>19</sup> involving residents in training. The feasibility of HM was validated by three descriptive studies by Hamerlynck et al.<sup>20</sup> Arnold et al.<sup>31</sup> and Bhagat et al.<sup>46</sup> Finally, HM was associated with a higher quality of life and patient satisfaction compared with the traditional technique, as demonstrated by an RCT by Rubino and Lukes<sup>30</sup> and by a multicenter prospective evaluation by Scheiber and Chen.<sup>33</sup> Focusing instead on outpatient use of HM, Papalona et al.<sup>25,29</sup>—both at the preliminary stage and in their final results—showed that in hysteroscopic polypectomy, HM was significantly faster, achieved a higher success rate for complete polypectomy, and required a shorter learning curve by personnel trained in the management of endometrial polyps compared with bipolar electrical resection.

### 3.8 | Retained products of conception (RPOC)

Eight studies examined the hysteroscopic morcellator in the treatment of RPOC.<sup>23,28,39,45,49,52,53,56</sup> Hamerlynck et al.<sup>23</sup> conducted a retrospective analysis of 105 cases of RPOC excised by HM, concluding that the latter may be an effective technique for the management of this disease. Equivalent results were obtained by two different prospective cohort studies.<sup>45,56</sup> The same group later carried out an RCT,<sup>28</sup> comparing HM with loop electrosurgical resection for the removal of placental remnants, finding a significant reduction in both operating time and total procedure time for HM. In a follow-up study from the same cohort, the reproductive and obstetric outcomes were evaluated<sup>39</sup>; the authors determined that the hysteroscopic removal of RPOC appears to have no adverse impact on reproductive outcomes and on pregnancy rates.

Evacuation of RPOC using the hysteroscopic morcellator is superior to ultrasound-guided electric vacuum aspiration in terms of the rate of complete removal, as demonstrated by an RCT<sup>52</sup> and a prospective cohort study<sup>53</sup> from Wagenaar et al.

Finally, the hysteroscopic removal of RPOC was associated with a high level of patient satisfaction in the prospective evaluation by Queiruga et al.<sup>49</sup>

### Quality of evidence

The evidence regarding the safety, effectiveness, and reliability of employing the hysteroscopic morcellator for the removal of RPOC has been classified as evidence level 2.

## 4 | DISCUSSION

### 4.1 | Comparison with existing literature

Hysteroscopic morcellation represents a feasible, safe, rapid, and cost-effective methodology for the treatment of intrauterine

pathology. This device is suitable for use in both outpatient and inpatient environments, ensuring an effective execution of the operative procedures. Furthermore, the technical features of the hysteroscopic morcellator enable its application in both the “no-touch” technique and “see-and-treat” procedures. However, it is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of diagnostic hysteroscopy acquired through appropriate training to fully master its potential.<sup>58</sup> The original intrauterine morcellator prototype developed by Smith & Nephew consisted of a 4.5-mm inner instrument, introduced through the straight working channel of a continuous flow 9-mm rigid endoscope; hence, cervical dilatation was required. The further miniaturization of the instruments has allowed the development of a wide range of surgical devices, perfectly compatible with the outpatient setting, without the use of speculum, cervical dilatation, and/or anesthesia. Currently, the most widely used morcellators feature an operative channel in which the actual instrument with rotating blades is inserted and an outer sheath of variable diameter ranging between 5.6 and 6.25 mm.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, new manually activated morcellators have recently been introduced to the market, with extremely reduced diameter, which can easily fit into the working channel of a 5-mm diagnostic hysteroscope.<sup>48,51</sup>

Regarding endometrial polypectomy, the hysteroscopic morcellator has shown a quicker operative time, lower surgical pain, and overall higher patient satisfaction in numerous high-quality studies, compared with traditional electrosurgical resection,<sup>26,27,38</sup> a bipolar electrode such as VersaPoint®<sup>25,29</sup> or electrosurgical snares.<sup>47</sup> In most cases, the structure of the endometrial polyp is of the same consistency as the normal mucosa, allowing for an effective and rapid removal even of large polyps. The results of our systematic review are consistent with the results previously reported by a meta-analysis conducted by Guo et al.<sup>60</sup>

Uterine leiomyomas can be slightly more difficult to excise with cold-knife electromechanical morcellation. Due to the increased presence of collagen fibers and frequent occurrences of intratumoral calcification, the fibers of the fibroid are often rigid and difficult to address without the use of electrical energy, as highlighted in the RCT by van Wessel et al.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, HM has shown no difference in terms of surgical outcomes compared with traditional resectoscopic techniques or bipolar electrodes, but a significant reduction in the operating time has been demonstrated by several articles.<sup>24,32,42,44</sup> These results are consistent with a meta-analysis conducted by Shazly et al.<sup>61</sup> and a systematic review conducted by Vitale et al.<sup>59</sup> However, it should be emphasized that the data reported in the present study are nothing more than a summary of data from original studies that reported excision of leiomyomas with an average size around 30 mm. Therefore, it would be necessary to define, in the right context, the applicability of HM for larger myomas as well. Future studies should investigate its potential applicability to FIGO (the International Federation of Gynecology & Obstetrics) Type 3 myomas as well.<sup>62-64</sup>

Hysteroscopic morcellation may also be slightly superior to the traditional techniques for evacuation of early miscarriages like

dilatation & curettage or electric vacuum aspiration, because of the possibility of obtaining direct visualization of both the cavity and the RPOC before and after surgery compared with “blind” techniques, which not infrequently lead to incomplete removal of intrauterine material. Recently also, Kelly et al.<sup>65</sup> demonstrated that hysteroscopy with morcellation is a safe diagnostic method for low- and high-grade endometrial pathologic conditions and does not result in increased spread of malignant cells, invasion of the lymphovascular space, or up-staging of patients. Future studies could therefore investigate the application that HM may have in fertility sparing treatment of endometrial cancer, where hysteroscopy is already widely used.<sup>66,67</sup> The only limitation of the morcellation technique, as reported by a recent meta-analysis,<sup>68</sup> may be bleeding, which can limit surgical visibility to the point of sometimes requiring an interruption of the procedure and a second surgical step. However, in the case of leiomyomas, as mentioned above, there may be many limitations. It is necessary to determine the real gain of using HM on large myomas; it is also necessary to define whether this tool can be used to approach submucosal myomas of different classifications and thus not only G0 or G1 for which the application seems almost taken for granted, but especially for G2 or even G3, in which the intramural component represents the major portion if not even the entirety.

## 4.2 | Strengths and limitations

In this systematic review, we comprehensively evaluated the efficacy, safety, and feasibility of HM in treating intrauterine pathologies based on a thorough search strategy and inclusion of 40 relevant studies.

The descriptive synthesis of results provides valuable insights into its application for specific conditions like endometrial polyps, uterine leiomyomas, and RPOC. The evidence summarized and grouped derives from high-quality publications, as 25 out of the 40 included studies were prospective, including 15 RCTs. Furthermore, in most of the included studies, the control patients underwent the same surgical procedure with different endoscopic instruments still commonly used in daily clinical practice, reflecting the significant advantages of introducing the morcellator in the gynecology departments.

Nevertheless, the lack of quantitative analysis due to data heterogeneity limits the ability to generalize findings. Some studies lacked consistency in reporting outcomes or had varying methodologies, potentially influencing the overall assessment. Additionally, identified limitations such as potential bleeding and the necessity for additional surgical steps in certain cases, underscore the need for careful consideration of patient selection and procedural approach.

## 4.3 | Implications

The findings suggest that integrating the hysteroscopic morcellator into gynecologic practice could enhance the management of

intrauterine pathologies, providing effective and efficient treatment with minimal complications. This may lead to improved patient outcomes and increased adoption of minimally invasive techniques in clinical practice.

However, careful consideration of potential limitations, such as bleeding risks and the need for additional surgical steps, is warranted when implementing this technology. Further research could focus on refining surgical protocols and addressing these challenges to optimize the use of hysteroscopic morcellators in routine clinical care.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

VC, SB, AG, and AF were responsible for the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of the data. AE, AD, and VA were responsible for drafting the work. ASL, CC, and AV were responsible for revising the work critically for important intellectual content. FS, LN, EC, and GR gave final approval of the version to be published. AE and AD agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work were appropriately investigated and resolved. All authors met the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors criteria for authorship and have read and agreed to the current version of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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