

**Introduction:** Isotretinoin (ITN) is widely prescribed for severe acne in adolescents and young adults, a population in which anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction (ACLR) is also common. Long-standing concerns about impaired wound or tendon-to-bone healing have prompted many surgeons to delay procedures, despite limited orthopedic-specific evidence. This retrospective case series evaluates postoperative healing in ITN-exposed patients undergoing ACLR to examine the relevance of surgical delay precautions in orthopedic care.

**Methods:** We retrospectively reviewed primary ACLR cases from 2000–2025 at a multisite orthopedic practice with documented ITN exposure within 12 months of surgery and at least 3 months of follow-up. ITN exposure was categorized as perioperative ( $\leq 10$  days), recent ( $> 10$  days–6 months), or remote ( $> 6$ –12 months). The primary outcome was incision-site wound complications; secondary outcomes included graft-site issues, surgical complications, and graft failure.

**Results:** Fifty-nine patients (53% female; mean age  $18 \pm 5$  years; BMI  $23 \pm 2.9$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>, mean follow-up of  $9.0 \pm 3.9$  months) who underwent autograft ACLR (83% bone–patellar tendon–bone, 10% hamstring, 7% quadriceps) were included. Wound complications occurred in three patients (5.1%): two in the remote group ( $n = 32$ ) (bleeding, bullae) and one in the recent group ( $n = 19$ ) (Dermabond reaction), with none in the perioperative group ( $n = 8$ ). One graft-site complication (mini-cyclops lesion/fat-pad scarring) occurred in the remote group (1.7%). Arthrofibrosis developed in five patients (8.5%) (four remote and one recent), and graft retear occurred in five patients (8.5%) (two remote, two recent, one perioperative).

**Conclusion:** This case series observed a low incidence of wound, graft-site, surgical, and graft-failure complications among ITN-exposed patients undergoing ACLR. These results are hypothesis-generating and highlight the need for adequately powered comparative studies to clarify whether ITN exposure affects postoperative healing in orthopedic surgery.