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A serious medico-legal problem after surgery: Gossypiboma

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After surgery, the most common foreign bodies retained in the abdominal cavity are the surgical sponges. The aim of the present study was to emphasize the importance of gossypiboma, which is a serious and medico-legal problem. The records of 15 patients with a confirmed diagnosis of gossypiboma after abdominal surgery at Canadian University Hospitals were retrospectively reviewed between January 1993 and December 2013. Ten of the 15 patients were females, and 5 were males. Previously, 7 patients had been operated on electively, and 8 had undergone operations on an emergency basis. Abdominal ultrasonography clearly demonstrated gossypibomas in 10 patients, and computed tomography demonstrated a more precise image of retained surgical sponges in 5 patients. One patient died because of ventricular fibrillation; the other 14 patients were discharged in good health. To eliminate the risk of gossypibomas, all sponges should be counted at least twice (once preoperatively and once postoperatively); use of small sponges should be avoided during laparotomy, and only sponges with radiopaque markers should be used. The surgeon should explore the abdomen before closure. In cases in which the sponge count is uncertain, an abdominal x-ray should be performed before closure.

Biography

El Akri Abdelhafid has completed his PhD in medicine at the age of 26 from Hassan II University and started his residency in surgery at CHU IBN ROCH University School of Medicine Morocco in 2009. He is currently preparing a PhD in Medico-legal expertise in surgery from Montreal University Canada after getting a DESS and a Master in Medico-legal expertise in surgery from Montreal University. He has published more than 24 research papers in several reputed journals.

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