Reviewer’s report

Title: Trans-visceral migration of retained surgical gauze as cause of intestinal obstruction: a case report.

Version: 4 Date: 12 June 2007

Reviewer: Falco Hietbrink

I am familiar with the literature and believe that this case meets one of the 7 criteria for evaluation in the journal: An unexpected event in the course of observing or treating a patient

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes
Is the case report authentic?: Yes
Is this case worth reporting?: Yes
Is the case report persuasive?: Yes
Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes
Does the case report have diagnostic value?: Yes
Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Comments to authors:

General

The authors present an interesting case about a retained surgical gauze. The gauze has been in situ for 3 years and migrated into the lumen of the intestine. The patient presented with signs of intestinal obstruction and radiological evaluation showed a surgical gauze, which was removed by laparotomy. The report has good educational aspects. The authors give a summary of the case report discussing this rare finding of a migrated gauze. They suggest more surgeons should report on this complication to change medico-legal implications.

Revisions necessary for publication

1) The authors should stretch that the assumed intraluminal migration is an hypothesis. In addition to this, the authors should elaborate on the findings during the second surgery: where there signs of fistula or abscesses?
2) Are there ideas how the patient could have been without symptoms for such a long time?
3) Carefull counting of intestinal swaps should reduce the retaining of these gauzes in the abdomen. The rare event of a retention of a gauze is a serious complication, but the authors put to much weight on the medico-legal aspects. In the present formulation, it gives no additional value to the case report.
4) Kaiser et al do not show that a falsely correct sponge count occurs in 76% of the abdominal interventions, but in 76% of the cases where a legal procedure was started for a retained sponge. Please refraze.
5) Shorten the discussion by deleting the repeatings.

What next?: Accept after minor revisions

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published