

A case of small bowel obstruction secondary to an incisional hernia through a 5-mm lateral port site

Anderson I¹, Houda C¹, Zhang J¹

¹The Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, Australia

Background

Port site hernias are a rare complication following laparoscopic surgery. Larger port sites, stretching of the trocar site for specimen removal, being over 60 years or age, parity, and conditions associated with delayed healing increase the risk of port site hernias¹.

Case

A 47-year-old woman underwent an elective laparoscopic left ovarian cystectomy and excision of endometriosis. Four ports were used – a 10-mm umbilical port, and three 5-mm ports. A dermoid cyst was removed with EndoCatch via the 5-mm left iliac fossa port. All three of the 5-mm ports were removed at the completion of the surgery under direct vision. The sheath at the umbilical port was closed with 0 Vicryl. Skin at all port sites was closed with 3-0 Monocryl continuous subcuticular suture. She recovered well and was discharged home the following day.

She presented day 4 and day 7 post operatively with nausea and vomiting and was managed conservatively with IV fluid and antiemetics. At both presentations she had a soft, mildly tender abdomen with bowel sounds present. She presented again on day 10 with worsening vomiting, constipation, and lethargy. She had not opened her bowels for 8 days. Bloods showed a mildly elevated white cell count, elevated creatinine and liver function tests. A CT scan was performed which showed a left Spigelian hernia, containing a loop of small bowel, causing proximal mechanical small bowel obstruction. An open incisional hernia repair was performed without any complications. The bowel was healthy. She recovered well following and had no ongoing issues when reviewed 6 weeks later.

Discussion

It is standard clinical practice to close the sheath at 10-mm incisions, however there is limited evidence regarding routine closure of 5-mm port sites. Whilst rare, clinicians should be mindful of this complication given its significant morbidity, and consider imaging when a patient presents post-operatively.



References:

1. Pereira N, Hutchinson AP, Irani M, Chung ER, Lekovich JP, Chung PH, Zarnegar R, Rosenwaks Z. 5-millimeter trocar-site hernias after laparoscopy requiring surgical repair. *Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynecology*. 2016 May 1;23(4):505-11.