Find an occult hernia? Repair it.

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BACKGROUND

Occult hernias, or an undetectable mass of herniated tissue, can be a source of persistent pain for patients without physical exam findings consistent with a hernia. The highest incidence of occult hernias are incidentally discovered inguinal hernias; approximately 20% of patients with unilateral known hernias, will present with bilateral inguinal hernias upon surgical findings. This case report describes a patient with known Spigelian hernia, found to have an incidentally found right inguinal hernia; both hernias were repaired.

CASE PRESENTATION

In this case report, we present a 78-year-old female who underwent an elective Spigelian hernia repair. and was incidentally found to have a right inguinal hernia. Three 8mm trocars were inserted to address the Spigelian hernia. Upon inspection, the patient was incidentally found to have a right inguinal hernia. The operative plan was adjusted for the creation of the peritoneal dissection flap for the right inguinal hernia above the Spigelian fascial defect. The flap was extended caudally to Cooper's ligament and the right indirect hernia was repaired in usual fashion. Attention was then directed to the Spigelian hernia which was closed in two layers. Progrip mesh was then placed under the hernia defect. The dissection flap was closed with v-lock suture.

DISCUSSION

The incidence of occult hernias in patients undergoing hernia repair is approximately 8%. It is important to fully inspect the entire abdomen in every hernia repair for these occult defects as they can lead to harmful and poor outcomes for the patient if not addressed, particularly in the elderly population. Repairing "hidden" hernias at this time provides significant benefit to the patient, as it can avoid additional operative procedures as well as future pain and potential incarceration.

CONCLUSION

Addressing occult hernias during index operations can spare patients from presenting with incarceration and strangulation, without adding significant operative time. It is crucial during every hernia repair to survey the entire intra-abdominal cavity to assess for occult, or hidden hernias.

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