Bleeding Complications of Colorectal Surgery: Lessons Learned from a French National Database of Serious Adverse Events Related to Health Care

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Introduction: Bleeding is a frequent complication of colorectal surgery, especially during the postoperative period. However, there are few publications on this topic, and most of them focus on anastomotic bleeding. The aim of this study was to evaluate the main concerns of surgeons regarding postoperative bleeding in colorectal surgery.

Patients and Methods: From January 2020 to January 2023, all serious adverse events related to care (SAERC) involving bleeding complications of colorectal surgery were extracted. Data about proctology were not evaluated in this study. Data were extracted from the REX database, a governmental national database hosted by the Haute Autorité de Santé. The declaration of 3 SAERC per year per surgeon is required for individual accreditation of surgeons. After extraction of the declarations of interest, all SAERC were reviewed by three surgeons to confirm the relevance and quality of the declarations. A qualitative analysis of these SAERC was performed using MAXQDA24 software by another surgeon.

Results: During the study period, a total of 7544 SAERC were declared by surgeons, 1571 of which were about hemorrhage. After review by the three surgeons, a total of 1331 SAERC related to bleeding were included. There were 247 SAERC (19%) related to colorectal surgery and proctology, and 85 related specifically to colorectal surgery, making it the second most common surgery after parietal surgery. The most common codes used in SAERC were reoperation (n=56), peritoneal hemorrhage (n=45), anticoagulation (n=26), postoperative hemorrhagic shock (n=24), and stoma (n=17) (figure 1). Hemorrhage of the anastomosis was identified in only 8 cases of the SAERC. The most common word associated with leak in the context of bleeding pas reoperation (figure 2). The most common words associated with haemorrage of the anastomosis were reoperation and stoma (figure 3).

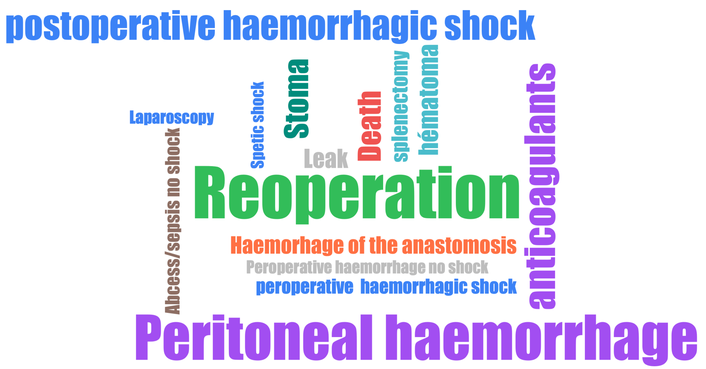


Figure 1. The most common words for the description of bleeding SAERC

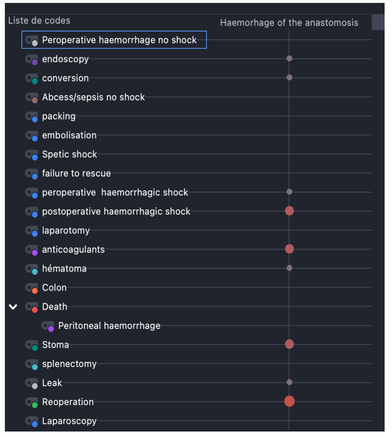


Figure 3. The most common words associated to haemorrhage of the anastomosis

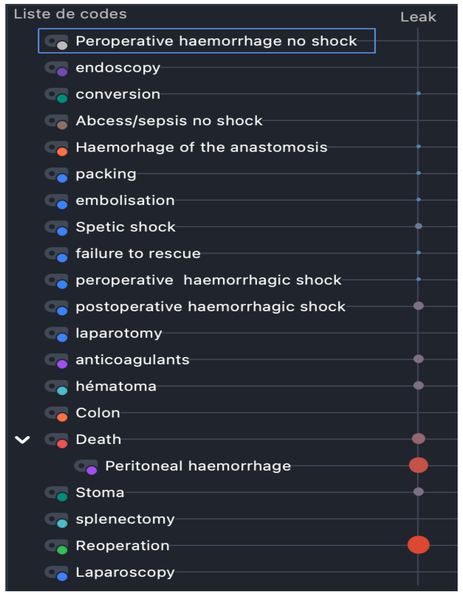


Figure 2. The most common words associated to leak

Conclusion: Even though most publications on bleeding after colorectal surgery focus on the management of anastomotic hemorrhage, this is not the main concern of surgeons, as indicated by the SAERC data. To better address surgeons' concerns, more studies on the management of peritoneal bleeding are necessary.