



Japan Council for Quality Health Care

Project to Collect Medical Near-Miss/
Adverse Event Information

Medical Safety
Information

Rectal Injury Due to Glycerin Enema Administered in a Standing Position

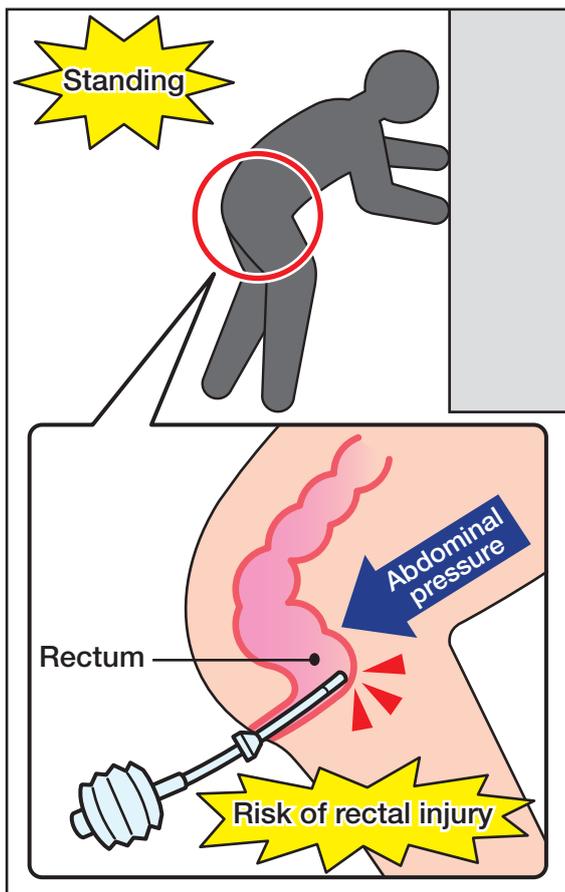
No.157, December 2019



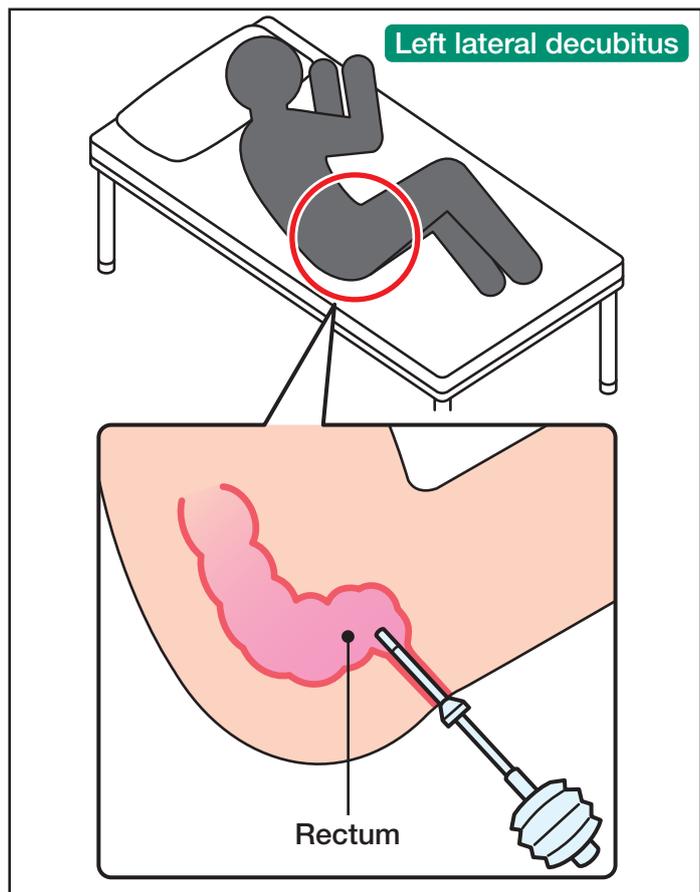
Events in which a glycerin enema was administered in a standing position were highlighted in Medical Safety Information No.3 “Rectal perforation associated with glycerin enema” (February 2007) and the Recurrence of Events and Occurrence of Similar Events section of the 31st Quarterly Report. As four cases have subsequently been reported in which rectal injury resulted from the administration of a glycerin enema in a standing position, information about this issue is hereby provided (information collection period: from January 1, 2014 to October 31, 2019).

Cases have been reported in which rectal injury resulted from the administration of a glycerin enema in a standing position.

Image of case 1



Position when administering a glycerin enema



Rectal Injury Due to Glycerin Enema Administered in a Standing Position

Case 1

The patient had not defecated for four days. The nurse intended to administer the enema in the left lateral decubitus position, but took the patient to the toilet at the patient's request and injected the glycerin enema solution in the standing position. The patient pressed the call button in the toilet 10 minutes later and complained to the nurse of difficulty in defecating. When the nurse looked at the patient's anal area, they noticed a swelling 3 cm wide and a small amount of blood. The patient was diagnosed with rectal perforation after the physician examined them and performed a CT examination.

Case 2

The physician issued an order for a glycerin enema, as the patient had not defecated for eight days. The patient asked for the enema to be administered in the toilet, so the nurse injected the glycerin enema solution with the patient in a standing position in the toilet. Bleeding was observed during defecation and, when an abdominal CT examination was subsequently performed, the patient was found to have mucosal damage about 3 cm from the anus.

Preventive measures taken at the medical institutions in which the events occurred

- Administer enemas in the left lateral decubitus position.
- Ensure that all the institution's medical staff are aware of the risk arising from administering enemas in a standing position and explain it to the patient, too.

The measures above are examples. Please consider initiatives suitable for your own facility.

* As part of the Project to Collect Medical Near-Miss/Adverse Event Information (a Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare grant project), this medical safety information was prepared based on the cases collected in the Project as well as on opinions of the "Comprehensive Evaluation Panel" to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of medical adverse events. See the Project website for details.

<http://www.med-safe.jp/>

* Accuracy of information was ensured at the time of preparation but cannot be guaranteed in the future.

* This information is intended neither to limit the discretion of healthcare providers nor to impose certain obligations or responsibilities on them.

