Project to Collect Medical Near-Miss/Adverse Event Information

Medical Safety Information

July 2024

No.212

Delayed Discovery of the Migration of an Open Drain into the Body

Cases have been reported in which medical staff failed to notice that an open drain had migrated into the body and assumed that the drain had already been removed, thereby delaying discovery of the migration.

Six such cases were reported between January 1, 2017 and May 31, 2024. This information was compiled on the basis of the content featured in the Analysis Themes section of the 52nd Quarterly Report.

Main Background Factors of Reported Events

- -The physician had not noted the number of drains left indwelling on the record.
- -The physician and the nurse had not checked the number of drains removed.
- -After replacing the gauze, the duty physician had noted on the record “There is no drain in the wound,” but the nurse misunderstood this to mean that the duty physician had removed the drain along with the gauze and shared that information.
- -The physician and the nurse did not think that an open drain would migrate into the body.

Open drain left indwelling

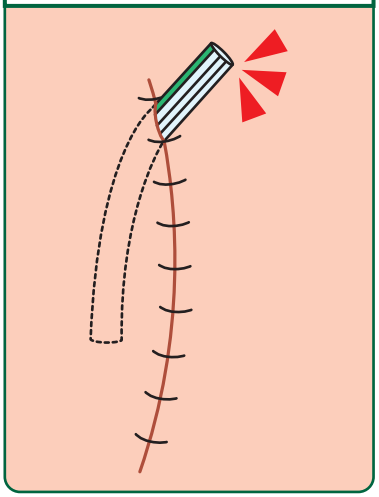
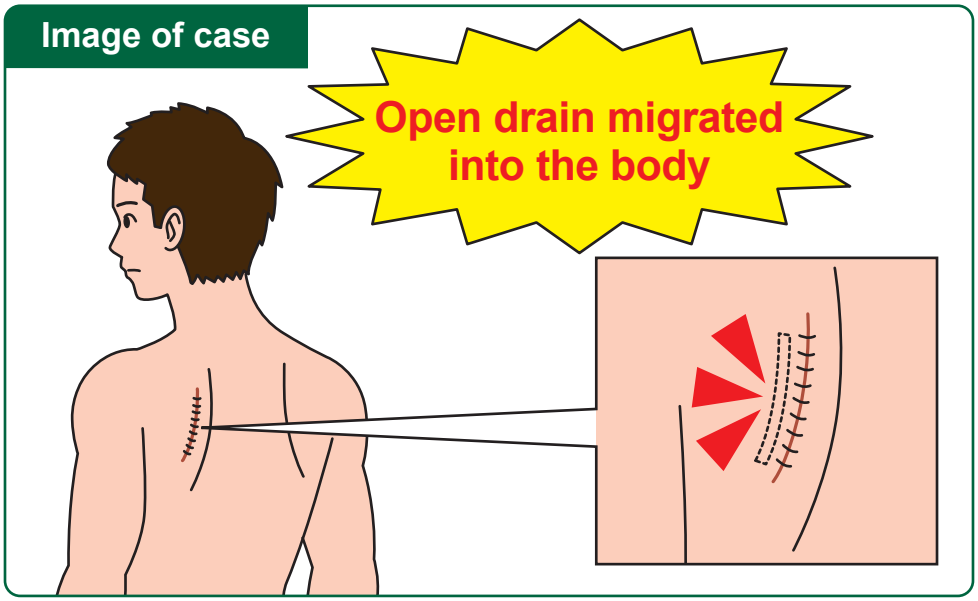


Image of case



Delayed Discovery of the Migration of an Open Drain into the Body

Case 1

When carrying out surgery on the scapula, Physician A left a total of six Penrose drains indwelling under the muscular layer and under the skin. When removing the Penrose drains on the second day after surgery, Physician A assumed that all the drains had been removed. Four months later, when the patient underwent a chest X-ray for another operation, Physician B noticed a Penrose drain that had migrated into the body.

Case 2

After performing incision and drainage of a perianal abscess, the physician left a Penrose drain indwelling in the abscess cavity. The following day, the physician noticed that there was no Penrose drain on the surface of the patient's body, but assumed that it had come out, because they had no previous experience of the migration of a drain. The following month, when the patient underwent anal fistula surgery, the physician discovered the Penrose drain that had migrated into the perianal region.

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

-Make a note of the number of drains left indwelling on the record and check the number when removing the drains.

-If the number of drains left indwelling does not match the number of drains removed, carry out an X-ray examination to check whether any drains have migrated into the body.

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

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