Use of olive-tipped wire with moulded antibiotic-loaded cement spacer in 2-stage revision hip arthroplasty aids in easy removal

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In two stage revision for septic loosening of a total hip, the cement spacer from the first stage functions as a spacer and carrier of antibiotics.¹ We use the antibiotic-loaded cement spacer moulded in the shape of a hemi-arthroplasty. On occasion, we have had difficulty in removing the spacer due to cement fracture and retained pieces of cement in the femoral canal. We now incorporate an olive-tipped wire into the cement mould and curve it at the proximal end. The spacer is then inserted into the proximal femur and joint is reduced (Fig. 1). At the second stage, the hip joint is dislocated and the curved proximal end of the wire is used to pull the cement spacer out in single piece thus preventing fracture. A custom-made spacer allows introduction of

Figure 1 X-ray showing introduction of wire.

additional heat-stable antibiotics. Problems from removal of a fractured stem of cement are overcome by using an olive-tipped wire as support.

Reference

1. Younger AS, Duncan CP, Masri BA, McGraw RW. The outcome of two-stage arthroplasty using a custom-made interval spacer to treat the infected hip. *J Arthroplasty* 1997; **12**: 615–23.