TECHNICAL TIP

Maintaining an adequate surgical field during laparoscopic surgery

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Using either a tonsil swab or small gauze to control persistent oozing during laparoscopic surgery can be invaluable. These swabs may however become misplaced within the abdomen and damage may ensue while searching for the elusive swabs. We found that by transfixing a 3.0 VICRYL* through a pledget allows us to have a device that we can introduce comfortably through a 10mm port with the suture length maintained to ensure the suture is coming out of port

Figure 1

Figure 2

(Fig 1). We can then apply pressure using the pledget or use it for blunt dissection in the safe knowledge that retrieval is possible by merely pulling on the remaining suture (Fig 2).

(*Manufactured by Ethicon Inc)

A technique for soft tissue handling during knee surgery

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The risk of infection can be reduced by minimising soft tissue handling. With this in mind, we developed the following technique that utilises two Littlewood tissue forceps, a plain urethral catheter and an artery clip. The forceps are placed on each side of the wound to hold the tissue. The catheter is passed through the loops of the forceps, the ends of which are held by the artery clip (Fig 1). This technique gives adequate exposure throughout the operation while reducing the need for an assistant.

Reference

1. Cross MJ. Complications of total knee arthroplasty. Medscape Reference. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1250540> (cited June 2011).

Figure 1 An artery clip is used to hold both ends of the catheter. Soft tissues are well exposed and an assistant is not required to retract the soft tissues.