Technical Section [TECHNICAL NOTES AND TIPS

A simple technique for double ligation of the vas deferens during vasectomy

NA Faure Walker, T Rashid, J Bellringer

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK

CORRESPONDENCE TO

James Bellringer, E: james.bellringer@imperial.nhs.uk

BACKGROUND

Vasectomy is the most effective means of male contraception and is considered very safe.¹ It is commonly performed by urologists, general surgeons and general practitioners. Late failure occurs in approximately 1 in 2,000.² Techniques to avoid this include folding the transected end back on itself before ligation (creating a 'shepherd's crook'), cautery of the ends of the vas deferens and burying the two ends of the vas in different fascial planes (fascial interposition). No robust data exist to support a particular technique over simple ligation to prevent late recanalisation and spontaneous pregnancy.³

TECHNIQUE

After delivering the vas with a ring forceps, an artery clip is applied across the vas to one side of the ring forceps. Lifting this clip

Figure 1 Ligation of a loop of vas created by lifting the artery clip above the ring forceps

Figure 2 A short segment of vas between two 'shepherd's crooks' after both ligations are complete

above the ring forceps creates a loop of vas, which is then tied in continuity (Fig 1). The process is repeated on the other side of the ring forceps, resulting in two 'shepherd's crooks' with a short segment of vas in between (Fig 2). A segment of this can be excised for histological examination.

DISCUSSION

Burying the two ends of the vas in different fascial planes can be fiddly. Similarly, creating shepherd's crooks from two divided vas ends can be technically trying. The technique of vasectomy described here achieves division of the vas, with creation of a shepherd's crook at each of the ends, which are effectively doubly ligated. It is simpler technically and is proposed as an effective alternative to achieve low recanalisation rates following vasectomy.

References

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