Crystallized or Liquid Phenol Application in Pilonidal Sinus Treatment

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Dear editor,

Day by day, new papers are being published about the minimal invasive pilonidal sinus treatment modalities. We are happy to see some papers being published in the late issues of *Indian Journal of Surgery* [1, 2]. Phenol is the most preferred agent for sclerosing the pilonidal sinuses, but it may cause harm to the patient and it has the potential to cause harm to the health workers as well. In both of the articles we read in your journal [1, 2], the crystallized form of the phenol was used to perform sclerosis in pilonidal sinus cavities. As we are relevant to this subject and as we have experience in using both forms of phenol, we think that using the liquid form instead of the crystallized form would be wiser and safer due to the following reasons:

1. The crystallized phenol is highly fragile. It is not safe to transport it from the container to the sinus tract by the help of a clamp. It can easily fall into pieces and spill around.
2. It would be wiser to carry the crystallized phenol by the help of a sheet of paper or a cone. But if the amount of the phenol is more than the volume of the sinus tract, overflowing phenol would cause serious skin burns.
3. The high-pressure application of the liquid phenol by the help of a syringe is dangerous. This may be much more dangerous than the crystallized phenol application. During the high-pressure application, uncontrolled splashing

around may happen. Also, there is a risk of peri-cavitary tissue infiltration of phenol.

4. We think that liquid phenol can be applied into the cavity under control. We use an ear stick that has cotton ball at the tip, which is easily accessible and cheap. After dipping the cotton tip of the ear stick into the solution, we insert it into the cavity and move it all along the tracts.
5. Instead of passively filling up the cavity with phenol, the application of it by the help of an applicator will provide a mechanical debridement and also helps in better diffusing into the tracts.
6. We prefer to use the manufactured, factory production cotton ear sticks. There is a risk of cotton tip falling off into the cavity in the ones we produced ourselves. But the risk is lower in the factory produced ones.
7. We don't believe that the use of 80 % liquid phenol compared to the crystallized phenol will decrease the effectiveness of phenol. The crystallized phenol is accepted as 100 % concentration. It has been demonstrated that even the 40 % concentration of liquid phenol effectively can be used in the pilonidal sinus treatment [3].
8. As the last, the crystallized phenol immediately turns to the liquid form in the cavity due to the body temperature. For this reason, we do not see any scientific superiority of the crystallized phenol use in the pilonidal sinus treatment compared to the liquid form.

Best regards,

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