

9th International Conference on

Clinical & Medical Case Reports

September 27-28, 2018 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

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A forgotten retained drain inside a knee for 10 years: A case report

Introduction: Surgical drains are inserted into the wound after an arthroscopic knee procedure mainly to decrease fluid collection after the operation. The use of postoperative surgical drains remains controversial.

Case presentation: This report presents a rare case of a forgotten retained drain that was accidentally found inside a knee 10 years after an arthroscopic procedure. The drain was removed without any complications.

Discussion: A retained and broken drain during removal is a very rare and preventable complication that can be stressful for both the patient and surgeon. Most of the literature supports that retained drains in the soft tissues do not affect long-term outcomes, but if the drain fragment is in the intra-articular area, it might cause complications. Furthermore, there are several preventive measures to avoid retained surgical drains.

Conclusion: By reporting this case of a forgotten drain retained inside a knee for approximately 10 years, we aim to illustrate the potential risk of leaving a drain inside the joint following an arthroscopic procedure. Furthermore, we advise that surgeons maintain a high index of suspicion for iatrogenic complications when a patient continues to complain about unexplained pain at the surgical site.

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