

# Answer

## Abscess Due to a “Lost” Stone During the Previous Cholecystectomy

The surgical exploration confirmed the hypothesis of an abscess due to a spilled gallstone. The stone was removed, the area washed, and the patient fully recovered. Although the positron emission tomographic/computed tomographic imaging was performed owing to the patient’s history of cancer, a recurrent vulvar cancer was unlikely because the peritoneum is a rare primary site of vulvar cancer metastasis.

Gallbladder perforation with or without bile and stone spillage is a relatively common event (reported in up to 40% of laparoscopic cholecystectomies).<sup>1</sup> It occurs more frequently during laparoscopic procedures than open laparoscopic procedures, performed by junior surgeons, in male and/or elderly patients, and in the presence of a severely inflamed gallbladder and intra-abdominal adhesions.<sup>2</sup>

Although most spilled stones can be found and extracted during the same cholecystectomy procedure, some 0.8% to 1% of patients secondarily present with a stone-related complication.<sup>3</sup> They often appear late after the cholecystectomy (up to several years) with abdominal pain and signs of infection, due to a local abscess.<sup>4</sup> The mechanism by which gallstones induce the abscess is not completely understood, but pigmented and large (>1.5 cm) stones appear to be more often involved.<sup>5,6</sup> Other potential stone-related complications include the occurrence of adhesions, fistula, obstruction, intestinal perforation, and pleural empyema.<sup>7</sup> In case of a stone spillage during a cholecystectomy, the abdominal cavity should be carefully explored with the removal of as many stones as possible and with intense irrigation.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the present case illustrates the risk of an abscess linked to lost stones, which can appear years after cholecystectomy (10 years in the present case). Such a diagnosis should be considered in case of inflammation/abscess at the surface of the lower part of the right lobe of the liver for patients who had a cholecystectomy. Every effort should be made to find and remove lost stones during cholecystectomy.

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