Lost IUD penetrating bladder wall

Thanks to Vural and colleagues who reported their interesting case of a misplaced intrauterine device (IUD). I would like to mention some points in relation to their letter.

With the increased uptake of intrauterine methods and the majority of uterine perforations reported, including the Dalkon Shield, 5 months. However, initial counselling on access to ultrasound or a referral has to be in place if fitting procedures take place are not equipped. threads at routine follow up post-IUD insertion are rarely reported. It was situated subdermally in her left arm and could not break as it is very flexible, and we showed the patient how it could be removed her implant using the ‘pop-out’ technique. This implant was also broken into two halves (Figure 1), and no visible threads at routine follow up post-IUD insertion are rare. Some of these reports mention more than one occurrence. All reports concern perforation that resulted in an IUD located within the urinary tract. Some of these reports, especially those written by urologists, refer to spontaneous migration of the device. Vural et al. think it is a matter of debate how devices end up in the urinary tract. Consensus opinion is, however, that spontaneous migration does not happen; the device is in fact forced through the urethral wall at the time of insertion.5–11 The only exceptions are rare cases of partial perforation mentioned by Zakin et al.3

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References

Two cases of broken Implanon®

We thought Journal readers might be interested to hear about two cases of broken Implanon® that we came across in our practice recently.

Between October 2003 and December 2009 we fitted 465 Implanon and removed 254. We have always reassured clients that the implant cannot break as it is very flexible, and we showed clients when we removed an implant how it could be bent and stretched without breaking. We cannot, however, state with certainty any more after having removed two broken implants within a 7-week period.

The first client, an 18-year-old, had only used condoms previously. She had an Implanon fitted on 20 May 2009. She was seen on 1 July 2009 as she had been advised that the implant had broken. It was situated subdermally in her left inner upper arm over the triceps and we reassured her it felt intact but bent. She was otherwise happy with the implant. She came back to the clinic on 12 December 2009 and asked for the implant to be removed as she had been bleeding since the end of July with only 3 or 4 non-bloody days. She declined a trial with oral contraceptive pills and stated she wanted to use condoms in the future, so we proceeded to remove her implant using the ‘pop-out’ technique. It was a small, easy removal but we were really surprised when we saw the implant. It was nearly broken in half and was

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Figure 1 Photograph showing the two broken implants removed from our clients’ arms

only joined by the fine sheath. It had two further breaks and was also bent (Figure 1). On questioning, the client admitted that she often played with the implant.

The second client was 22 years old. She had used condoms previously when one split and she became pregnant. Her implant was fitted 6 months after a termination of pregnancy in April 2007. She was happy with her implant initially but later she experienced irregular prolonged bleeding and so she was ‘topped up’ with the combined oral contraceptive pill, which controlled the bleeding as long as she took the pills regularly. The client was seen in clinic on 3 February 2010 after she had decided to have her implant removed and continue taking the combined pill. The implant was subdermally situated in her left inner upper arm over the triceps and felt intact. It was removed easily by means of the ‘pop-out’ technique. This implant was also broken into two halves (Figure 1), and once the client agreed that she played with her implant a lot.

We have been experimenting with the implants we removed and feel that the only explanation could be a repetitive bending action that weakens the structure of the rod. We tried bending one of these implants around 200 times and only managed to bend it not break it.

We could find only one published article referring to another case of a broken Implanon.1 In this case and in our two cases there was irregular bleeding. As Pickard and Bacon suggested in their article, the broken implant could result in an inadequate release of the oestrogen and thus unsuppressible irregular bleeding. These authors recommended that if a broken implant is suspected of causing irregular bleeding then it should be replaced.

We spoke with a doctor from the pharmaceutical company concerned and were unable to obtain any more information about similar cases; however, it seems the hypothesis of Pickard and Bacon could be true. We could try to confirm this hypothesis by checking blood levels of oestrogen, however this is an expensive test.

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Reference

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