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# The small bites technique for closure of abdominal midline incisions – a video vignette

Dear Editor,

Small bites suturing is a technique for laparotomy closure that has been shown to be effective for prevention of incisional hernia. It was initially promoted by Israelsson [1] and has gradually been adopted worldwide. Stitches are taken only in the aponeurosis, without muscle or fatty tissue, 5–8 mm from the wound edge and 4–5 mm apart. The suture length/wound length ratio (SL/WL) must be at least 4:1. The strength of the sutured wound increases for higher ratios. This technique prolongs the operation by a few minutes but is cost-effective because expense resulting from subsequent incisional hernias is lower. It has also been demonstrated to reduce surgical site infection and the risk of evisceration.

Video S1 in the Supporting Information shows the technique step by step and its most important points [2, 3].

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Idea for the work: MGU. Video recording: CSM. Participating surgeons: MGU, ACC, AMB, MPG. Video creation and editing: ECA. Critical review and approval of the final version: MGU.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data are available on request due to privacy/ethical restrictions.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

We have informed consent from the patient for the use of images for scientific and research purposes.

## FUNDING

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## REFERENCES

1. Israelsson LA, Milbourn D. Prevention of incisional hernias. How to close a midline incision. *Surg Clin N Am*. 2013;93:1027–40.
2. Deerenberg EB, Harlaar JJ, Steyerberg EW, et al. Small bites versus large bites for closure of abdominal midline incisions (STITCH): a double-blind, multicentre, randomised controlled trial. *Lancet*. 2015;386:1254–60.
3. Millbourn D, Cengiz Y, Israelsson LA. Effect of stitch length on wound complications after closure of midline incisions: a randomized controlled trial. *Arch Surg*. 2009;144(11):1056–9.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section.