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Laparoscopic Triple Cholecystectomy

Cláudio Corá Mottin, MD, MSC, Marcelo Garcia Toneto, MD, and Alexandre Vontobel Padoin, MD

Abstract: Gallbladder triplication is an unusual congenital biliary malformation, and its laparoscopic management has not been described. We report the 11th case of gallbladder triplication and the first successfully treated with laparoscopic cholecystectomy. We consider the procedure reliable and safe, after proper identification of the common biliary duct.

Key Words: gallbladder, malformation, laparoscopy

(*Surg Laparosc Endosc Percutan Tech* 2004;14:163–164)

Triple gallbladder is a rare anomaly of the biliary tract, with only 10 similar cases described in the literature. After performing a Medline search, we have not found any other report of a laparoscopic cholecystectomy in a patient with triple gall-

bladder. This case report describes a gallbladder triplication successfully treated with laparoscopic cholecystectomy and is followed by a review of the literature.

CASE REPORT

A 36-year-old female presented with abdominal pain in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen. The ultrasound revealed gallbladder stones. Routine preoperative laboratory exams were normal and a laparoscopic cholecystectomy was scheduled due to symptomatic cholelithiasis.

Morphologic alterations of the gallbladder were observed from the beginning of the procedure, when the surgeons noticed a second mass, suggesting a gallbladder duplication. Following a careful and complete dissection of the biliary structures, three independent gallbladders were identified, each one communicating with the common bile duct through its own cystic duct (Fig. 1). The vascularization of the gallbladders was made through one common cystic artery that divided to reach each one of the gallbladders. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy was performed in 165 minutes. After the removal of the three gallbladders, small stones were identified in each of

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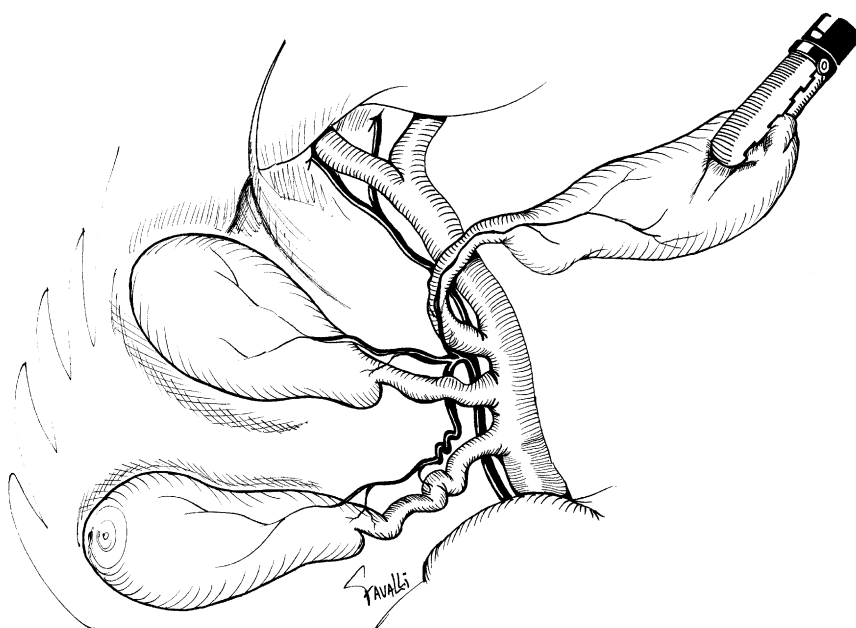


FIGURE 1. Cartoon depicting a transoperative image, showing three independent gallbladders, each one communicating with the common bile duct through its own cystic duct. Video still image is available, but had poor printing quality.

them. There were no postoperative complications, and the patient was released from the hospital the following day.

DISCUSSION

Triple gallbladder is a rare malformation of the biliary tract, with only ten similar cases described in the literature thus far. This is a case report of a gallbladder triplication, successfully treated by laparoscopic cholecystectomy. In 1979, Kurzweg and Cole¹ reported the ninth case of triple gallbladder and discussed the previous eight. In 1981, Foster² reported another case and reviewed anatomic variations of triple gallbladder. He also described the fifth case of triple gallbladder with three cystic ducts emptying separately into the common duct. Laparoscopic cholecystectomy has been described in patients with duplication of gallbladder.³⁻⁵ A Medline search of the literature has not shown any previous report of laparoscopic cholecystectomy in patients with triple gallbladder.

The procedure described above had no complications, being considered safe and reliable. The authors considered that it is not necessary to convert such cases to open surgery, as long as proper anatomic identification of the biliary tract is achieved. When dissection alone is not enough for complete identification of the gallbladder and ducts, a transoperative cholangiography is suggested, to prevent biliary lesions.

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