Accidental Burns during Surgery

Key points for safe use

(Case 1) During laparoscopic surgery, a lighted rigid endoscope was placed on a drape. After the surgery, it was found that the heat of the electric scalpel burned the drape, and left a burn on the patient’s thigh under the drape as well.

1. Precautions when handling a light source device

- When using a light source with an endoscope or a retractor, etc., do not place the tip of the light source directly on a drape.

After the light source has been turned off, the tip of the endoscope or the disconnected light cable remains hot for a certain time!
During surgery, an electric scalpel was placed on a drape. After the surgery, it was found that the heat of the electric scalpel burned the drape, and left a burn on the patient’s thigh under the drape as well.

2 Precautions when handling an electric scalpel, etc.

- Do not place the tip of electric scalpel or laser directly on a drape.

The tip of electric scalpel is extremely hot (approx. 300°C) during use and remains hot (100°C or higher) for a certain time after being turned off!
An example of management of electric scalpel, etc. during surgery

In principle, after using an electric scalpel, etc., it should not be placed on a drape. However, using a holster or a silicon mat, as shown above, could be helpful depending on the circumstances during surgery.

About this information
* PMDA Medical Safety Information is issued by the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency for the purpose of providing healthcare providers with clearer information from the perspective of promoting the safe use of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. The information presented here has been compiled, with the assistance of expert advice, from cases collected as Medical Accident Information Reports by the Japan Council for Quality Health Care, and collected as Adverse Drug Reaction and Malfunction Reports in accordance with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law.

* We have tried to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of its compilation but do not guarantee its accuracy in the future.

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