Complications from elective lipoabdominoplasty and baclofen pump translocation in a spinal cord injury patient

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Background
- Abdominoplasty (“Tummy Tuck”) is performed with the goal of achieving a more aesthetically pleasing abdomen1
- Abdominoplasty is performed for those with excess abdominal skin or fat, often following significant weight loss or bariatric procedures1
- In 2019, over 118,000 elective abdominoplasty procedures were performed in the USA. Greater than 94% of recipients of abdominoplasty were women.2
- Spinal cord injury patients are at risk for obesity, with incidence of 40-66%1, due to decreased metabolic rate, limited mobility and diminished activity level.4
- SCI patients have less fat free mass and greater fat mass than able-bodied counterparts, due to muscle atrophy and physical inactivity.3

Introduction
- 30-year-old female with T4 incomplete paraplegia from remote spinal infarction in 2015
- Managed with intrathecal baclofen pump for severe hip flexor and lower extremity spasticity
- Bladder management with suprapubic catheter
- Patient was daily cigarette smoker

Surgery and Initial Complications
- Underwent cosmetic lipo-abdominoplasty, panniculectomy and baclofen pump translocation following significant intentional weight loss
- Baclofen pump was translocated from the right flank to the abdomen
- Admitted to IPR for 16 days for oral antispasmodics, antibiotics and extensive wound care
- With worsening spasticity, XR revealed baclofen pump had flipped (Figure 2), requiring surgical repositioning (Figure 3 and 4)
- Patient returned to IPR following procedure and was discharged in stable condition

Discussion
- SCI patients are at risk for central obesity, yet little literature exists on elective surgical interventions
- ADL independence, comfortability in prone positioning and abdominal aesthetics may improve with elective abdominoplasty/panniculectomy
- Prior to elective procedures, it is important to screen for risk factors of poor healing, including active cigarette smoking, diabetes mellitus or poorly controlled abdominal spasticity4
- Baclofen pump implantation/manipulation increases the likelihood of infection and malfunction5,6, deep surgical site infections increase risk of meningitis severe infection8

References