

## DOMICILARY URETHRAL CATHERISATION

Clinical practice is never short of surprises. A relatively common surgical emergency for elderly men is acute urinary retention. Sometimes these patients are discharged with an indwelling catheter if for some reason definitive treatment is postponed. Patients are also known to refuse surgery and opt for life with a urinary catheter.

Some innovative patients are known to improvise for themselves ways to manage urethral obstruction. I have heard of a number of old men who take advantage of the self retaining Foley's catheter inserted for them at hospital. Somehow they manage to remove the catheter on their own, probably by shrewd observation of how the balloon is inflated and deflated for them by hospital staff. They then keep the catheter and insert it to relieve themselves when necessary. The well used tube is usually to be found in a plastic bag in the pocket. English gentlemen in the nineteenth century according to folklore kept their catheters under their top-hat. But that is not practical here!

I have here the photograph (figure 1) of the instrument of a very resourceful patient. For some reason perhaps, he never had a chance to lay hold of a hospital catheter. He has however managed to make his own disposable catheters. It is produced from the plastic sheath of electrical wires and he says he can make a new one whenever he wishes. He uses cooking oil as a lubricant and has managed himself for three years. Alas, his problem has got more difficult with time and he has fallen into the hands of a surgeon.

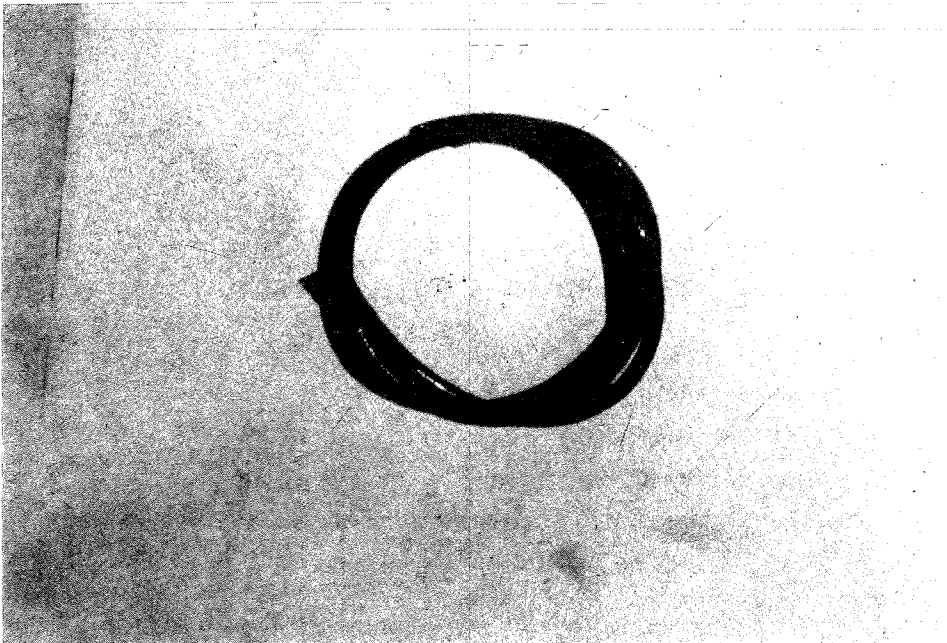


Fig. 1. Disposable catheter made by resourceful patient.

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