

Delayed spontaneous bladder rupture post vaginal delivery: A rare puerperal emergency

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Spontaneous bladder rupture is an uncommon but potentially life-threatening complication, an often-overlooked cause of acute abdomen in the postpartum period. Though more frequently linked to obstructed labour, trauma, or instrumentation, it can also occur unexpectedly following a seemingly normal delivery, posing a diagnostic and clinical challenge. **Case Description:** We present the case of an 18-year-old primigravida who developed severe lower abdominal pain and acute urinary retention on postpartum day three, preceded by a distinct 'popping' sensation. Her spontaneous vaginal delivery was uncomplicated, with no use of induction, augmentation, or instrumentation. Initial imaging raised suspicion of intraperitoneal fluid, prompting diagnostic laparoscopy, which was later converted to laparotomy. Intraoperative findings confirmed a spontaneous bladder rupture. The bladder was repaired, and she recovered well postoperatively. No predisposing urological pathology was identified. **Discussion:** This case highlights the importance of considering spontaneous bladder rupture as one of the differential diagnoses of postpartum acute abdomen, even in patients without classical risk factors. Spontaneous bladder rupture during precipitate labour is theoretically possible, especially if the bladder is distended and uncatheterized, but it is exceedingly rare and usually associated with other predisposing factors, whereby in this patient possible cystitis or chronic recurrent infection. This case also highlights that spontaneous bladder rupture can still occur even in the absence of labour trauma or instrumentation. Early recognition and prompt surgical intervention are essential for a favourable outcome.