Staged Closure of a Giant Omphalocele Using an External Tissue Expander and an Acellular Matrix

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Background
- Omphalocele presents across a wide spectrum of severity
- Historically these abdominal wall defects have been closed primarily or in a delayed fashion using the sac as a silo or with “escharotic therapy”
- Giant omphalocele precludes fascial closure and limits treatment options
- Rupture of the sac of a giant omphalocele at delivery poses a unique challenge to the pediatric surgeon

Case
- We report the case of a full term male born with a giant omphalocele which ruptured at delivery
- The sac contained all of the small and large bowel as well as the liver
- The abdominal wall defect measured 15 cms and encompassed the entirety of the anterior abdominal wall
- Because fascial closure was not possible we were forced to achieve epidermal closure with a novel combination of therapy

Treatment
- After birth the ruptured omphalocele sack was excised and replaced with a silastic patch which was reduced over the first weeks of the child’s life (Image 1).
- Because reduction eventually lead to dehiscence of the silastic silo from the fascia a human dermal matrix was used to replace the fascia and an external tissue expander was used to obtain further reduction and skin coverage (Images 2-4).
- The external tissue expander lead to significant reduction and skin advancement under medical paralysis (Figure 5-6).
- Residual human acellular dermal matrix became dry and infected and was excised. A vacuum closure device was placed until all tissue was healthy. A porcine acellular matrix and vacuum device were then placed (Figures 7-8).
- Near complete epithelialization was subsequently achieved (Figure 9).

Conclusions
- Giant omphalocele with rupture at birth is a difficult problem for the pediatric surgeon
- Multiple wound treatment modalities may be necessary to achieve skin closure
- Our technique utilizing external tissue expanders and an acellular porcine matrix allowed skin closure and hospital discharge by 7 months of age.