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A novel use of near infra-red light in assisting with TaTME planes – a video vignette

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Dear Sir,

Transanal total mesorectal excision (TaTME) has gained popularity in the surgical management of low rectal cancers and is potentially advantageous to clinical, oncological and functional outcomes by providing more accurate TME dissection [1]. The transanal component of the procedure involves circumferential dissection of the mesorectum following purse-string closure until entering the peritoneal cavity [2]. When utilising a two-team approach, at “Rendez-vous” between the two surgical fields, assistance can be given by each team to facilitate TME completion [3, 4].

When operating transanally, dissecting in the TME plane can be difficult. Maintaining the correct plane of dissection is essential in reducing complications from veering into the neurovascular bundles or urethral territory and preventing recurrence by breaching the rectal tube. In our institution, we have published a technique on cadaveric use of near infra-red (NIR) fluorescence to help identify and prevent injury to the urethra [5]. Here we present a novel use of NIR light during a two-team approach to TaTME to help localise the point of “Rendez-vous” between the abdominal and transanal components.

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