

DEFINITION

1. A hernia is the protrusion of a viscus or part of a viscus outside the cavity which normally contains it. The protrusion is usually through an abnormal opening in the wall of the containing cavity. A femoral hernia is a protrusion of abdominal contents into the femoral canal, which occupies the most medial compartment of the femoral sheath and extends from the femoral ring to the saphenous opening.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

2. Femoral hernia usually presents as a swelling in the groin. In the absence of complications, other symptoms are not prominent. The hernia is difficult to reduce, ie. to return the contents of the hernia to the abdomen, and it cannot be effectively controlled by a truss. Because of its narrow rigid neck and tortuous course, femoral hernia is liable to strangulation, a state where the blood supply is compromised and the hernia is liable to gangrene. Strangulation presents with abdominal pain and can lead to intestinal obstruction.

AETIOLOGY

3. Femoral hernia is more common in women because of the pelvic anatomy. Obesity and pregnancy are also predisposing factors. Powerful muscular effort or repeated increases of intra-abdominal pressure, as with a chronic cough or straining at micturition or defaecation, may precipitate the hernia.

CONCLUSION

4. Femoral hernia is the protrusion of abdominal contents into the femoral canal which may be caused by a number of factors that are discussed in the previous paragraph.

REFERENCE

Mann C V and Russell R C G (Eds). Bailey and Love's Short Practice of Surgery. 21st Ed. 1992. London Chapman and Hall Medical. p1288–1291.

December 1992